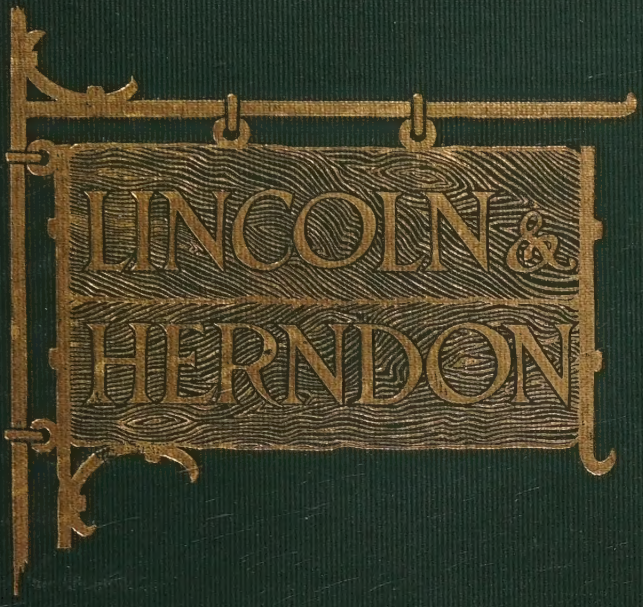
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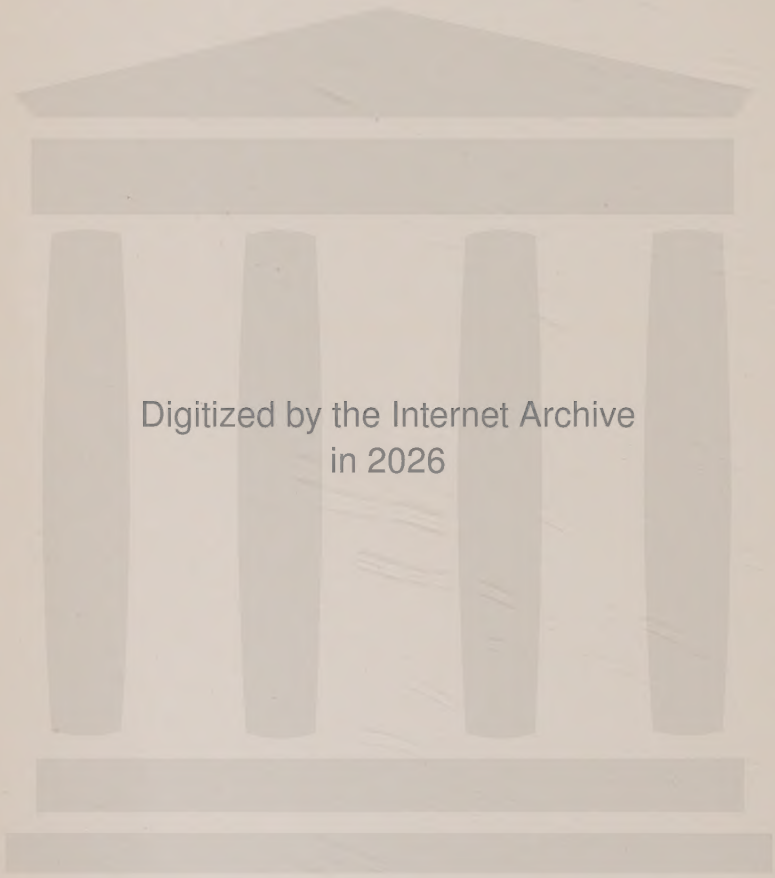
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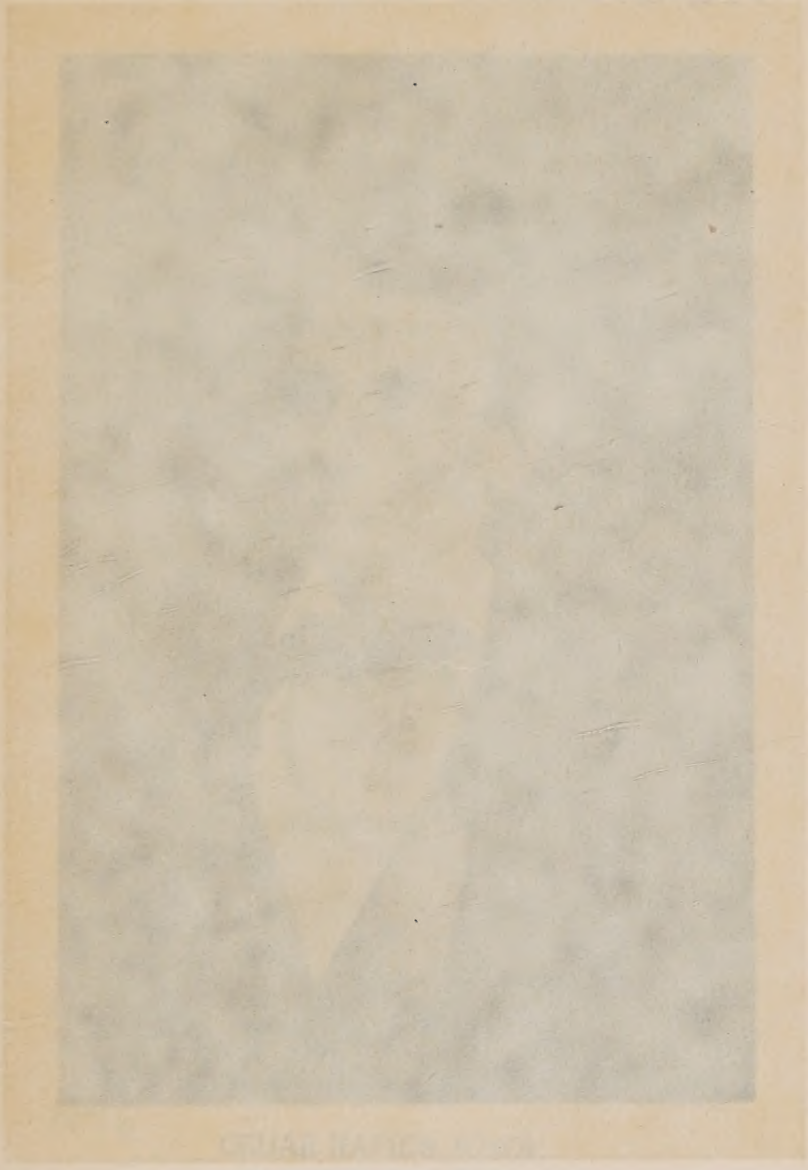

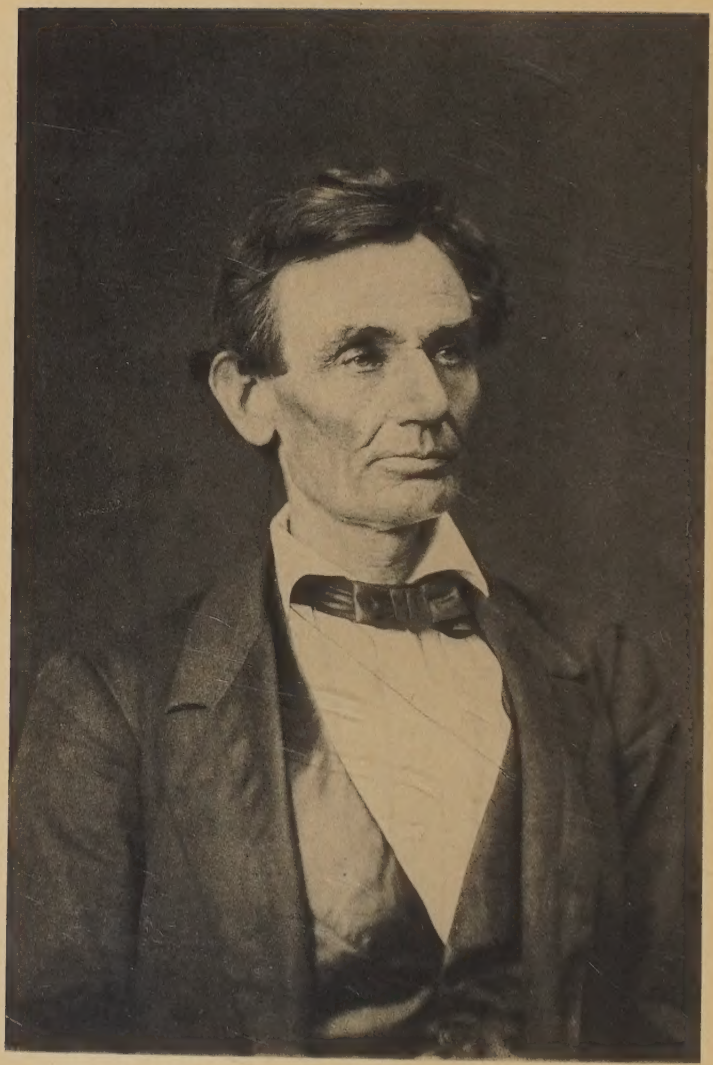

LINCOLN AND HERNDON

BY
JOSEPH FORT NEWTON
Author of "David Swing: Poet-Preacher"

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Published November, 1910

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TO

JOSEPHINE KATE

"THE BLESSED BABY"

WITH LOVE AND JOY

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FOREWORD

Whoso sends forth another Lincoln book, of which there are so many, must show cause why it should be read. It is believed that the present volume will prove its own excuse for being, by virtue of the new material which it contains, if for no other reason. It is not a biography of Lincoln, nor a detailed account of the life of Herndon, but a study of their personal and political fellowship in working out the solution of a great human problem; and it should be judged by its spirit, its purpose, and its record of facts.

Every study of the kind, by the very nature of its material, presents difficulties in the matter of arrangement and form, not all of which have been overcome in this instance. Letters impede the narrative, when they do not divert attention from it, so that what is gained in color is lost in movement; and the aim has been to repeat as little as possible of what every biographer and historian must recite. Many figures cross the page, to each of whom the author has meant to be just, though it has not been easy to keep the balance when they were so often unjust to each other. Also; in view of the real service of Herndon to Lincoln, it has required some effort to be charitable to those members of the writing fraternity who have so persistently belittled the junior member of the firm.

For the use of the Herndon-Parker letters, here published for the first time, my thanks are due to Mr. F. B. Sanborn, whose wealth of such materials is only surpassed by his generosity to his younger fellow students. He it was who saw the value of those intense and vivid letters as revealing much of the inner history of the period, making some things clear that had hitherto been dim — though he need not be held to account for the use here made of them. My thanks are also due to Mr. Horace White, for the letters of Mr. Herndon writ-

ten during the last year of his life; to Mr. Jesse W. Weik, for access to the Herndon manuscripts; and to Mr. Henry B. Rankin, whose reminiscences and suggestions were invaluable. Similarly, the Illinois Historical Society was most helpful, and Mrs. Annie Fleury, a daughter of Mr. Herndon, rendered every aid within her power.

Such a study suggests many reflections. One who looks back over that stormy era, when the life of the nation hung in a balance, will have no need to walk the floor for fear of the future, assured that should an hour of danger strike a man will step forth to meet it. Having weathered such a storm, this republic has nothing to fear except a decay of manhood, a forgetting of principles, and a fading of ideals. Once divided in all save name, it is now united in fact, in spirit, in historic memories, and patriotic hopes — Lincoln himself a "mystic cord of memory," of more power for the safety and sanctity of the nation than its army and navy. So it will be in times to come, if its citizens "here highly resolve" to follow no leader who, in his private character and public counsels, does not practice a like moderation, justice, firmness, and gentleness of spirit.

If this book, written by the son of a Southern soldier, assists, even in a little way, to a clearer understanding of the greatest figure in our history, who was at once a child of the South and a leader of the North, it will have done what it was sincerely meant to do. J. F. N.

September 4, 1910

INTRODUCTION

Before leaving America on what was to be his last journey, in January, 1859, Theodore Parker communicated to me his wish that I should be one of his three executors, with special charge of the posthumous publication of his writings. The other two executors, John Manley of Boston and Frederick May of Dorchester — a first cousin of Mrs. Bronson Alcott — were capable men of business, and good friends of mine, as of Parker, but not specially devoted to scholarship and letters. I acted with them in the settlement of the estate, and was ready to proceed with the literary task; but Mrs. Parker had formed the opinion that Joseph Lyman, another good friend of Parker, was the proper person for editor; and I did not press my claim as executor. Perhaps in recognition of this conduct, but with no previous notice to me, Mrs. Parker, at her death, years after, bequeathed me all her husband's manuscripts, copyrights, and correspondence, so far as the same had been preserved in her own hands — many of the original letters having been returned to the writers or destroyed.

Among those originals I found the whole of the five years' correspondence between Parker and Herndon, the law-partner of Abraham Lincoln for more than twenty years. I saw the historical and political value of this peculiar interchange of opinion and fact, by which Parker was brought near the mind of one of his latest friends, who was to complete the work of slave-emancipation — in which Parker had been active for nearly twenty years before his death — and was to die as the second great martyr in the cause of American emancipation. But it was not convenient for me to edit these letters; nor was the time ripe for this, thirty years ago. This Mr. Newton has now done with research and discretion, collating, correcting, and combining the mass of material accumulated since Lincoln's death, and contributing his own verdict on the characters and events of the crisis. He has added new material,

bearing on the relations between Lincoln and Herndon, to whom earlier writers have by no means done justice; but who in this book stands revealed in his actual character, as the most important witness and chronicler of his partner's career. He writes from his own point of view, and with the advantage that lapse of time gives to the seeker after that most elusive chameleon, historical truth. It is a work well done, and will stand the test of after years, which unsparingly judge the mere eulogy or invective that would pass for biography.

In the volume now completed, my early and beloved friend, Theodore Parker, becomes almost a shadowy figure in the vast drama of national regeneration; since he died, like Moses, within sight of the Promised Land that he was never to enter. But his work has been so well done, and was so heartily recognized by Herndon, in these enthusiastic and picturesque letters, that this shadow stands for something substantial, which the many volumes of Parker's discourses will certify and make good. He appears here as in some sort the inspirer of Herndon, and through him of Lincoln — the grandest personage of our long unfolding drama, and one of the most tragic. At the memorial meeting for Lincoln in Concord, April 19, 1865, where Emerson gave his matchless eulogy, it fell to me to express the general sentiment in verse, thus:

The Power that sways the world with love,
(Though War and Wrath His angels are),
Throned thee, all earthly kings above,
On threatened Freedom's flaming car —
To frighten tyrants, near and far.

His purpose high thy course impelled
O'er War's red height and smoldering plain;
When awe, when pity thee withheld,
He gave thy chafing speeds the rein,
Till at thy feet lay Slavery slain.

Then ceased thy task — another hand
Takes up the burden thou lay'st down:
Sorrowing and glad, the rescued land
Twofold awards thy just renown —
The victor's and the martyr's crown.

There was an earlier martyr, without whose sacrifice in the

van of the conflict, the strife would have been less sharp at first, but more prolonged and doubtful — the figure, yet more tragic, of John Brown. That singular association of resemblance by contrast, calls up each of these two with the other; so like in their aims and their persistence, so different in their method and appeal. They stood for the Old and the New Testament — for severe justice and for mercy that tempers justice. Brown, like Lincoln, was originally and always for the Union. Both saw that negro slavery was the grand foe to a perfect Union, and for that reason they resisted and overthrew it.

F. B. Sanborn

Concord, Mass., Sept. 20, 1910

I know Lincoln better than he knows himself. I know this seems a little strong, but I risk the assertion. Lincoln is a man of heart — aye, as gentle as a woman's and as tender — but he has a will strong as iron. He therefore loves all mankind, hates slavery and every form of despotism. Put these together — love for the slave, and a determination, a will, that justice, strong and unyielding, shall be done when he has the right to act and you can form your own conclusion. Lincoln will fail here, namely, if a question of political economy — if any question comes up which is doubtful, questionable, which no man can demonstrate, then his friends can rule him; but when on Justice, Right, Liberty, the Government, the Constitution, and the Union, then you may all stand aside: he will rule then, and no man can move him — no set of men can do it. There is no failure here. This is Lincoln, and you mark my prediction. You and I must keep the people right; God will keep Lincoln right. — W. H. Herndon in Letter to Hon. Henry Wilson, December 21, 1860.

CHAPTER I

The Junior Partner

" Lincoln & Herndon "— so read the old law shingle which hung in the bare stairway opposite the Court House Square, in Springfield. It had hung there for many years, inviting the passerby, when the senior member of the firm was suddenly called from his dingy back office to a task the greatest ever committed to human hands, leaving Herndon to pursue the practice alone. The junior partner was not unwilling to have it so, being devoid of an itch for office, and having devoted years of tireless and self-effacing labor in behalf of his friend and chief, who was also the embodiment of the principles nearest to his own heart. They parted, and a great war rolled between them, but that did not sever the tie which time and sorrow and devotion to a mighty cause had woven. Though one was taken and the other left, the old shingle still hung in the stairway, at the request of Lincoln, until death dissolved the partnership.

So far little has been written about Herndon, and some have spoken of him in a tone as supercilious as it is unjust. This is unfortunate, as though he were worthy of notice only by virtue of accident, whereas one can hardly know Lincoln without knowing his partner, his loyal friend, his indefatigable fellow-worker. It was a notable partnership, more for its political than for its legal activity, but it will appear more notable when the service of the junior partner is known. Neither man was a learned lawyer, as that phrase is now used, but both were honest, able, and just, and each in his own key was truly and impressively eloquent when expounding or defending the fundamental rights of man. If we may not say that Herndon was a genius, he was at least a man of exceptional ability, and it is believed that when the

spirit and details of his service to Lincoln are known, he will be held in lasting and grateful memory.

Those who attempt, as historians, to recall the men of former times, must be just, and so far W. H. Herndon has not had his due. The present study is no apotheosis of him, but a portrayal of the man as he was, in private habit and public capacity, with particular reference to his service to Lincoln as friend and adviser, and later as biographer. No effort is made to enter into the purely technical aspects of their professional career. That has been done by another. Besides many reminiscences, one entire volume has been devoted to that special theme, and the details need not be repeated.[1] Our concern here is with the personal and political side of their partnership, their mutual confidence and inspiration, their influence upon each other, and the manner in which they settled by anticipation, in a country law office, the problem which later was to shake the minds of reflecting men and rend the nation. To this end some account must be given of Mr. Herndon, his antecedents, his environment, his personal history, and the qualities of his mind.

I

Herndon genealogy, if we cared to follow it, would take us far back and is perhaps part legendary. Among the names inscribed on the roll of Battle Abbey, as having come with William the Conqueror, is that of Heriview, the ancestor of the Herons, as they were afterwards called — one of whom is said to have followed King Richard in his crusade. One branch of the family assumed the suffix "don," and the name so written means "Bird of the Hills." The first of the family known, authentically, to have settled in this coun-

[1] *Lincoln the Lawyer*, by F. T. Hill (1906) — a book well conceived and admirable in many ways, but not free from error, nor exempt from grave injustice to Mr. Herndon. More than once the author is guilty of thinly disguised disrespect to Mr. Herndon, hardly crediting him with any ability as a lawyer at all. Nor is he justified in saying that Herndon was "unfortunately not the most reliable of chroniclers." This is to err, as so many have done who did not know the man.

try was William Herndon, who patented lands in St. Stephens parish, New Kent County, Virginia, as early as 1654, and who three years later married Catherine Digges, a daughter of the Governor of the Colony. This Herndon is a very real figure, a man of substance and quality, and was the foresire of a large family to be found in various parts of the South.

But we need go no further back than 1795, when Archer G. Herndon was born in Culpeper County, Virginia, and whose family moved to Green County, Kentucky, when he was about ten years of age. In 1816 this sturdy, keen-minded, rollicking youth married Rebecca Johnson, a young widow whose maiden name was Day, and their first child, William Henry, was born at Greensburg, Kentucky, December 28, 1818 — three months after Nancy Hanks Lincoln died in a lonely log cabin in the wilderness of Indiana. Two years later Archer Herndon moved with his wife and babe to Troy, Madison County, Illinois, where one child was born to them. The following year, 1821, they came to Sangamon County, arriving in a cart drawn by one mule, and settled on what is now German Prairie, five miles northeast of Springfield. This was nine years before Thomas Lincoln left his cabin in Indiana and came to Illinois — the land of "full-grown men," as the word means.

Archer Herndon and Thomas Lincoln were typical of the men who settled southern Illinois; and it was the southern part of the State that shaped the early history and laws of the commonwealth. Even as late as 1836 Chicago was a village of less than half a thousand folk huddled about a fort, and the northern counties were sparsely populated. Illinois was a Free State, by ordinance of Congress — with the exception of a few French families, who were allowed by special enactment to retain their slaves — and, strangely enough, it was for this very reason that its early settlers, though of Southern origin, chose it for a home. And so it remained, despite the effort made in 1822-3, to change it to a Slave State — Archer Herndon taking an active part on the side of slavery. The prevailing sentiment was of a peculiar color.

Many of the pioneers were poor and wished to find a country where their labor would not be degraded by contact with slave labor,[1] while others hated the negro either in freedom or slavery, and were decidedly averse to living with him as their equal before the law; and they were almost unanimously bitter in condemning any one suspected of favoring emancipation. Hence the drastic "Black Code," aimed at the free negro, which remained on the statute books until long after the Civil War.[2]

Archer Herndon lived on German Prairie until 1825, when he removed to Springfield and engaged in mercantile pursuits until 1836. During that time he erected the first regular tavern in the town, and attained to prominence as a Democratic politician. He was a "character" in his day, intense by nature, positive in his likes and dislikes, akin to the roysterer in both manners and morals, albeit a man of many excellent qualities. In the meantime his oldest son, William Henry, was growing up — a robust, sinewy lad, with large angular features, deep-set dark eyes, crowned with a shock of blue-black hair — and he was inclined, at times, to imitate his father in certain habits in which a father least cares to have his son follow him. Indeed, father and son were so much alike that their relations were often difficult, and would have been impossible but for the sweet diplomacy of a good and wise mother.

Young Herndon first saw Lincoln in 1832, when the steamer *Talisman* was puffing and wheezing about in the Sangamon, in her effort to force the passage and prove that the river was navigable. Rowan Herndon of New Salem — a cousin of William — who was chosen to pilot the steamer from near Springfield to the Illinois River, selected Lincoln as his assistant; and together they ran the *Talisman*, which Lincoln afterwards described as having "a five-foot boiler and a seven-foot whistle, so that every time the whistle blew the

[1] See letter from W. H. Herndon to Theodore Parker, Feb. 16, 1856, in a subsequent chapter.

[2] *History of Illinois*, by Governor Ford, pp. 30-50 (1854); *Negro Servitude in Illinois*, by N. D. Harris, Chap. I-IV (1904).

boat stopped." When the steamer left New Salem, William Herndon and other boys followed it, riding on horseback along the bank — a leisurely enough journey, for the gallant craft averaged only four miles a day. At Bogue's Mill the boat tied up, and the boys went aboard and explored the splendors of her interior decorations. There Herndon met his future partner, and the incident lost none of its comedy when in after years the two men were wont to talk over old times. They did not become well acquainted, however, until Lincoln made his second race for the Assembly two years later.

Lincoln returned to New Salem and lived with Rowan Herndon, buying from Herndon his half interest in the store which he owned with Berry. Failing in this enterprise, he became by turns a postmaster who carried his office in his hat, and a surveyor whose outfit was sold for debt; reading Blackstone at odd hours, but most of all the newspapers; also Gibbon, Volney, and Paine, under whose tutelage he became a rude denier of the rude theology of his day. Young Herndon frequently met him in those days, while visiting his cousin, and at the Rutledge Tavern where Lincoln lived after Rowan Herndon moved to the country. How far the early rationalism of Lincoln influenced the later views of Herndon, is not known; but something in the gentle, studious giant attracted the lad, and in the summer of 1834 the boy more than once accompanied him in his canvass for the Assembly, listening to his stories. The Herndon and Rutledge families were friends, and in a village where there were few secrets everyone followed the courtship of Lincoln and Ann Rutledge like a story-book, until it ended with the return of McNamar, who found his sweetheart dead and Lincoln broken-hearted. Herndon knew Ann Rutledge, and her death, which divided the life of Lincoln into before and after, touched him deeply, as may be seen in a lecture delivered by him in 1866, in which he first told the story.

During his first term in the Assembly Lincoln said little, and learned much. He was a candidate for re-election in 1836, Archer G. Herndon running for State Senator on the

Democratic ticket in the same campaign. Both men were elected and became members of the famous "Long Nine," by whose strategy the capital was moved from Vandalia to Springfield — which event Herndon celebrated, in his best manner, by opening a barrel of rum. Meanwhile, William Herndon was studying in the schools of Springfield, and serving at odd times as clerk in Joshua Speed's store. One of his teachers was John C. Calhoun, a gifted and lovable man under whom Lincoln had served as assistant surveyor, and who afterwards became famous, or infamous, in connection with the fraudulent Lecompton constitution in Kansas.[1] In the autumn of that year, 1836, Herndon entered the preparatory department of the Illinois College, at Jacksonville — five months before Lincoln rode into Springfield on a borrowed horse, with a pair of saddle-bags containing two or three law books and a few pieces of clothing, to make the new capital his home and Joshua Speed's store his headquarters.

Lincoln had served with Major John T. Stuart in the Black Hawk War — sworn into the service, it is said, by Jefferson Davis[2] — and Stuart now offered him a partnership at law, having loaned him books the while and induced him to move to Springfield. This offer was gladly accepted, and while Lincoln was only beginning the practice he did much of the work of the office, Stuart being deeply immersed in politics. At least nearly all the papers of the firm were written by him, though he had little love for such labor, and less or-

[1] When that document was transmitted by President Buchanan to Congress, on Feb. 2, 1858, it bore a note, "*Received from J. C. Calhoun, Esq., duly certified by him,*" recommending that Kansas be made a Slave State under it. A committee from the Legisature getting a hint of the fraudulent election returns, found them secreted in a candle-box under a wood-pile near Calhoun's office; so he was known as *John Candlebox Calhoun*. Better for him and for his country had he remained a surveyor and a school-teacher in Illinois; but Herndon, who loved him, left this story out of the record.

[2] "Then a tall, gawky, slab-sided, homely young man, dressed in a suit of blue jeans, presented himself as captain of a company of recruits, and was sworn in by Jefferson Davis." — *Life of Jefferson Davis*, by his wife, Vol. I, p. 132 (1890).

der in doing it. They mixed law with politics, both partners serving in the Assembly, and in the autumn of 1837 Stuart, after an exciting contest, defeated Douglas for Congress. This left Lincoln with all the work to do, besides the duty of helping his partner politically — a kind of industry congenial to him, which was no doubt one reason why Stuart chose him as managing clerk. He knew how to play the game of politics according to the rules thereof, and was not over-nice as to methods when no moral principle was involved.[1] On one issue, however, he had courageous convictions, nor did he at any time permit his Machiavellian shrewdness to over-reach them.

Slavery had become a question about which men in Illinois picked their words with care. So intense was the feeling that in March, 1837 — one month before Lincoln entered the office of Stuart — the Assembly passed a resolution expressing disapproval of the formation of Abolition societies and of the doctrines advocated by them. Many men who hated slavery sympathized in part with this action, on the ground that such agitation tended more to irritate men than to convince them, thus making the situation doubly difficult. An orator who expended his fiery eloquence in denouncing the evil, without suggesting any practical way of dealing with it, was felt to be " as one who beat the air." Still the resolution of the Assembly, passed with great enthusiasm, glibly ignored the moral principle involved, and it required some courage for Lincoln to file protest against it. But he did so in words so well-chosen and far-sighted that he had no need to alter them for thirty years. He held that slavery " is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of aboli-

[1] Governor Ford, writing of this period, and having in mind the wild schemes of internal improvement, could see nothing in Lincoln and Douglas but "dexterous jugglers and managers in politics, spared monuments of popular wrath, evincing how safe it is to be a politician, but how disastrous it may be to the community, to keep along with the fervor of the people, right or wrong." — *History of Illinois*, pp. 181-198 (1854). It should be added, in mitigation, that this indictment included all the "Long Nine," as well as others, naming the list; and in face of the record this arraignment does not seem unjust.

tion doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate the evils." On that basis he stood firm, and neither the allurements of good-fellowship nor the blandishments of office could move him.

Shortly afterwards Elijah Lovejoy, editor of the St. Louis *Observer*, a religious weekly, was driven from that city by a mob for expressing anti-slavery sentiments in his paper. Unwisely, as many thought, he established his paper at Alton, Illinois, only twenty miles distant by steamer, with the result that a mob attacked his press and he was shot while defending it. Not satisfied with this brutal crime, the mob threatened to attack Illinois College at Jacksonville, because its president, Edward Beecher, had stood guard with Lovejoy the night before the tragedy.[1] Excitement was at fever heat, and indignation meetings were held throughout the State. At a gathering of students, notable for its intensity of feeling, William Herndon, in a speech long remembered by his fellow students, denounced not only the enslavement of men, but the attempt to gag the press by mob rule.

The elder Herndon, who was intensely pro-slavery in his views, fearing that his son had become infected with the poison of abolitionism, withdrew the lad from college, remarking that he would have no part in the education of "a d—— Abolitionist pup!" It was as he had suspected. The lad came home an enthusiastic and radical Abolitionist, bold and outspoken, as was his way always, and the passion for liberty and justice exploded in him what faith he had in the religion of the church — as it exploded the faith of so many men of his ardent and vivid type in those days. At any rate, he was thereafter a rationalist, or perhaps one should say natu-

[1] See the *Autobiography of Julian M. Sturtevant*, edited by his son, Chap. XV (1896). Also, *Illinois College and the Anti-Slavery Movement in Illinois*, by C. H. Remmelkamp, a paper before the Illinois Historical Society (1909). Dr. Sturtevant was a professor in the Illinois College at the time of Lovejoy's death, and was his personal friend. Lovejoy may have been rash and unwise, as men count wisdom, but he had a soul of fire, and his name is written among the martyrs of liberty. See *Memoir of Lovejoy*, by Joseph and Owen Lovejoy, introduction by John Quincy Adams (1838).

ralist. There was a break between father and son, and the boy left home, though he remained religiously loyal to his mother, visiting her almost every day. He was again employed by Joshua Speed as a clerk in his store, probably at the suggestion of Lincoln, to whom he confided his new religious and political faith. Writing of the time immediately following, Mr. Herndon says:[1]

> On my return to Springfield from college, I hired to Joshua F. Speed as clerk in his store. My salary, seven hundred dollars per annum, was considered good pay. Speed, Lincoln, Charles R. Hurst, and I slept in the room upstairs over the store. I had worked for Speed before going to college, and after hiring to him this time again, continued in his employ for several years. The young men who congregated about the store formed a society for the encouragement of debate and other literary efforts. Sometimes we would meet in a lawyer's office and often in Speed's room. Besides the debates, poems and other original productions were read. Unfortunately we ruled out the ladies. . . . I have forgotten the name of the society — if it had any — and can only recall a few of its leading spirits. Lincoln, James Matheney, Noah Rickard, Evan Butler, Milton Hay, and Newton Francis were members. I joined also. Matheney was secretary. We were favored with all sorts of literary productions. Lincoln one night entertained us with a few lines in rhyme intended to illustrate some weakness in woman — her frailty, perhaps. Unfortunately, the manuscript has not been preserved. . . . Besides this organization we had a society in Springfield, which contained and commanded all the culture and talent of the place. Unlike the other one, its meetings were public, and reflected great credit on the community. We called it the "Young Men's Lyceum." Late in 1837, Lincoln delivered before the society a carefully prepared address on "The Perpetuation of Our Free Institutions." The inspiration and burthen of it was law and order. (It was brought out by the burning of a negro by a mob at St. Louis a few weeks before.) Matheney was appointed by the Lyceum to request of Lincoln a copy of his address and to see to its publication. . . . It was published in

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by W. H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik. All references are to the second edition (1892), the first being now practically inaccessible.

the *Sangamon Journal*, and created for the young orator a reputation which soon extended beyond the limits of the locality in which he lived.

Herndon had always the instinct of a student, though he was lacking in polish, as were most of the loungers who gathered about the inviting fireplace in Speed's store. One evening the talk turned on politics, and the disputants waxed warm as the discussion proceeded — Herndon sitting on a keg listening. Douglas led the Democrats, charging the Whigs with every sort of political crime. At last, excited and vehement, he sprang to his feet and challenged his opponents to debate the question in public, adding that the store was no place to talk politics. His challenge was accepted, and the contest was arranged to take place in the old Presbyterian church — Douglas, J. C. Calhoun, Josiah Lamborn, and Jesse Thomas to represent the Democrats; Stephen T. Logan, E. H. Baker, O. H. Browning, and Lincoln, in the order named, to represent the Whigs. One evening was given to each man, and it required more than a week to complete the tournament. Later, Lincoln and Calhoun debated the tariff question after the same manner, in the court house. Such debates were frequent, serving the double purpose of keeping party spirit alive and of giving young men a chance to be seen and heard.

Others who foregathered at Speed's store, to read poems and talk politics, won fame in after years. In company with these aspiring politicians Herndon began to learn, at close range, the workings of practical politics. He could not have had better teachers, for they were masters of all the various methods of that devious art; Lincoln quite the equal of any of them in pulling a wire or turning a trick. Herndon became in time, as this record will show, one of the most useful Abolitionists in the West — if not in the whole country — and it was due in large part to his training under these adroit leaders; his familiarity with the methods of practical politics making him more astute and wary, but not less intense or uncompromising, than his fellow radicals in the East. Lincoln was re-elected to the Assembly in 1838, after a canvass

which took him into almost every home in the county. The next year Major Stuart was re-elected to Congress, leaving his partner to attend to the practice of the firm, which by this time included the beginnings of "circuit riding"— following the judges from one log court house to another, always over bad roads and often across swollen streams; a kind of life Lincoln enjoyed, despite its inconveniences, for its roving, careless freedom, and its rollicking comradeship. So his days ran, full equally of law and politics, until April, 1841, when the firm of " Stuart & Lincoln " was dissolved.[1]

Herndon was nominally a Whig until 1853, and the " log cabin and hard cider campaign " of 1840 was the first in which he took an active part — his part including, besides a number of enthusiastic speeches, some industrious electioneering. Lincoln was on the Whig ticket that year, as candidate for Presidential Elector at large, and spoke at various rallies where a log cabin, with a gourd for a cider mug hanging on one side of the door, and a coon-skin nailed to the logs on the other, was the picturesque emblem of his party. While his friend was thus rising in politics, Herndon had fallen in love and married Mary J. Maxey — a Kentucky girl, born near Bowling Green in 1822, whose father, James Maxey, had come to Springfield in 1834. She was a woman to win the love of any man, as gentle and serene as her husband was impulsive and impetuous.

II

Thus far we have had to do with Lincoln chiefly as he touched Herndon, showing how their lives were braided together. He

[1] In his *Autobiography* Joseph Jefferson tells how Lincoln represented his father in a plea before the City Council against an exorbitant and prohibitory license imposed upon his theatre in 1839, as the result of a religious revival. The passage is picturesque but hardly correct, for Lincoln was at that time a member of the Board of Trustees of the town of Springfield, and must have acted in that capacity. The speech attributed to him was probably embellished by Jefferson's imagination, though it was the destiny of Lincoln to be fond of the drama with few opportunities to enjoy it. See *Abraham Lincoln*, by I. N. Phillips (1910).

was now thirty-one years of age, and behind him lay that strange, lonely, heroic, pathetic story which so many have tried to tell, but which still awaits the touch of a master hand. Indeed, Lincoln must puzzle any artist, for that he was so unlike any model — peculiar, particular, and unique, compounded of so many elements which in smaller natures are contradictory,[1] and yet withal so simple, natural, and human. The present study does not include his life in detail, even if this were the pen to record it; but as he enters a new career those early years return in the vividness of their monotony, their loneliness, privation, and toil; full of the patience that could walk down a long road without turning, brightened by dutifulness alone, pointed but not cheered by wayside anecdote; until at last, by integrity, fortitude, and resolute will, he was successful; not so much because he was sanguine of himself, as because he rated no eminence or honor too high or too difficult to attain. His later fame, so unlike his early life, made men stare, because they had not seen the steps he took upon the way.

So we meet him in 1840, making his way slowly, unhappy, ambitious, and alone. He was inured to hardship and poverty; rarely ill, being a man of regular habits, wiry and stalwart beyond the best of western men; having a certain innate dignity and charm of nature, despite his ungainly figure and ill-fitting garb; and what he was he had made himself. He had few illusions about himself or the world, and did not expect great destiny to come to him unsolicited, as a lottery prize. He knew there must be work, patience, wisdom, planning, disappointment; and, while he was not lazy, he always loafed a little, studying men more than books, and reading the issues as they developed. Never petulant but sometimes moody, he was fond of solitude and self-communion, and would often sit for hours looking absently at the ceiling, dead to the world and buried in thought. At such times he seemed to be a dreamer thinking. At other times, noted and remembered by his friends, a cloud would fall over his face, and he was the most hopeless and forlorn of mortals, as

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, pp. 240-242 (1886).

though tortured by some hidden sorrow, or brooding over some immemorial wrong that never in time or eternity could be set right. When the shadow lifted he was himself again, beguiling the hours with the aptness and ingenuities of his anecdotes — some of them more cogent than delicate, though he tolerated smuttiness only when it was disinfected by wit. His friends were selected with regard to sincerity chiefly; he loved not cliques, and those who knew him best were younger men. He was strangely reserved in friendship, rarely surrendering entire confidence, seldom a hero-worshiper; and for Douglas, his rival in love and politics, he had less admiration than revulsion. All the while he seemed to know everybody, and yet only Speed and Herndon ever felt that they knew him.

Lincoln was hard to know, particularly while he was in the process of making. He was, moreover, so deeply rooted in the soil of his time and place, yet towered so far above it, that the union in him of crudities and refinements was baffling. An example in point, at this period, may be seen in his relations with women, which have been much dwelt upon by his biographers; too much so, perhaps, yet one hesitates to erase a line. A master of men and at ease with them, he had no skill with women, and was never at his best in their presence, being not only deficient, as one of them said, in the knack of small attentions, but quite helpless amid the subtleties of the feminine nature. At the grave of Ann Rutledge he vowed, it is said, never to marry; yet within a few months he was strangely entangled again, learning from Mary Owens the comedy of love as before he had learned its tragedy. Judging from his letters to her, he had not yet put a foot into the upper circle of society, caring less than nothing, apparently, for that side of life.

No sooner had he entered that circle, in which he was never at home, than he met Mary Todd, a Kentucky girl of distinguished lineage, highly cultured, compact of brilliance, coquetry, and wit. Lincoln had not met such a woman before, and he was captivated by her cleverness, vivacity, and beauty. A courtship followed, and the friends of both were

astounded when the high-spirited belle announced her betrothal to the tall, loosely-knit lawyer. Relatives felt that they were not suited, and expressed forebodings. There were jars and misunderstandings. Douglas, fated to be a rival at every turn, was also a suitor for the hand of Mary Todd. Gossip said that Lincoln was devoted to Matilda Edwards, and that he told Mary so. Many thoughts must have crossed his mind as to the different roads they had traveled to their meeting, and he doubted his ability to make such a woman happy. Torn betwixt love and morbid misgivings, he took counsel of Joshua Speed, by whose advice he sought release, only to find himself more closely bound. The wedding day came but the marriage was not solemnized. Of so much we are sure; and the report is that Lincoln, who did not appear, was found by his friends wandering in utter despair, actually, it is said, contemplating suicide.[1]

Still, he was at his desk the next day in the Assembly, then in special session, though he did not appear often until later in the month. On the 19th J. J. Hardin announced his illness in the House, but he returned in time to take part in fighting a scheme to " reform " the judiciary, whereby the artful Douglas hoped to secure a seat on the Supreme Bench. Toward the close of the session some one twitted him on his experience with women, and he replied in his best vein of humor. But it was all on the outside. Inwardly he was tortured not only by the fact that he had wronged another, but by the feeling that he had lost his own self-respect. Which humiliation was the deeper, he knew not. Major Stuart was away in Congress, and what business the firm had fell on him, but neither work nor politics brought him relief. Near the end of the month he wrote to his partner, in a mood of dismal melancholy:

For not giving you a general summary of news, you must

[1] Herndon's account of this incident is undeniably vivid, and some think it highly embellished (Vol. 1, pp. 191-207). This and kindred questions will be considered in the review of the Herndon biography in a subsequent chapter. At any rate, the "fatal 1st of January," 1841, stands out in the life of Lincoln.

> pardon me; it is not in my power to do so. I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me. . . . I say this because I fear I shall not be able to attend to any business here, and a change of scene might help me. If I could be myself, I would rather remain at home with Judge Logan. I can write no more.

But there was more to the matter, if we may judge from his letters to Speed, which Herndon secured with difficulty and not without some omissions. Those letters, unique in their intimate disclosures, had to do with matters about which men seldom speak, much less write. The two friends seem to have talked about marriage until they had become fearful of it, as though it were a perilous leap into an abyss. Speed was passing through a similar ordeal of misgiving with regard to it, and Lincoln lectured him about his doubts and forebodings, probably at the same time arguing against his own. He warned his friend against too much solitude and self-torture; against mistaking the depressing influence of the weather for a suggestion of the devil; against an "intensity of thought which will sometimes wear the sweetest idea threadbare, and turn it into the bitterness of death." Such a state of mind he attributed to nervous debility in Speed, and hinted as much in his own case. Writing to Mary Speed, he tells of seeing a band of slaves, chained together, going South, the most cheerful and happy folk on board the boat. This leads him to reflect on the effect of condition upon human happiness, and he adds: "How true it is that 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' or in other words, that he renders the worst human condition tolerable, while he permits the best to be nothing better than tolerable." Thus he lived in a dun-colored world, sensitive to its plaintive, minor note, under a sky as gray as a tired face.

In April following "the fatal 1st of January" — for so Lincoln always referred to his wedding day — the firm of

" Stuart & Lincoln " was dissolved, and the junior member was offered a partnership with Stephen T. Logan, a former Judge of the Circuit Court. This offer was accepted, and the training which Lincoln received in the office of that precise, methodical jurist was one of the best parts of his education. Judge Logan was a little, weasened man, with a high, shrill voice, a keen, shrewd face, and a shock of yellow white hair — picturesque in his old cape, and admittedly the best trial lawyer in the State. He was devoted equally to the philosophy and the art of the law, re-reading Blackstone every year, and was such an adept at splitting hairs that a jury of farmers could see the divisions. The two men had little in common, beyond the fact that both were good Whigs and exceedingly anxious for political honors. Logan loved money, and kept most of the earnings; but this did not trouble Lincoln, who loved fame more than money, and regarded wealth as " simply a superfluity of things we don't need." That summer he visited Speed, who had sold his interests and moved back to Kentucky, and was much helped by the change of scene. Returning, he bent to his work, in his easy-going, unsystematic way, keeping an eye on the eddies of politics, and playing hide and seek with his shadowy melancholy.

The next winter, 1842, he took part in the Washingtonian temperance crusade, making several speeches, one of which has come down to us. Comparing it with his former efforts, one discovers a marked advance in restraint of style, which became every year less decorative and more forthright, simple, and thrusting; and the style was the man.[1] Rarely has that difficult theme been treated in so calm, earnest, and judicious a manner, with surer insight or a finer spirit. He was already dreaming, it would seem, of a time when there should be neither a *slave* nor a *drunkard* in the republic. But his address, so far from finding favor, excited hostility, for, speaking out of his wide knowledge of men, and the wise pity which

[1] See an admirable thesis of Prof. D. K. Dodge, of the University of Illinois, entitled, *Abraham Lincoln: The Evolution of His Literary Style* (1900). Also, a paper before the Royal Historical Society, London, by I. N. Arnold, entitled *Abraham Lincoln* (1881).

such knowledge begets, he was led to say, frankly, that those who had never fallen into the toils of the vice had escaped more by lack of appetite than by any moral superiority, and that taken as a class, drinking men would compare favorably in head and heart with any other class. This was as a red rag to the more intemperate of the temperance reformers, to whom drinking was a crime — a temper of mind to which Lincoln, as abstemious in habit as in speech, was averse. Indeed, his pre-eminent sanity in the midst of extremists was one of the chief attractions of his life.

By this time Speed had made the awful leap into matrimony, and Lincoln was anxious to know his fate. His letter of inquiry, which between any other two men would have been grossly intrusive, elicited a reply so startlingly favorable that he could hardly credit it. He himself was thinking of marriage again, friends having brought the former fiancés together during the summer, to an accompaniment of a comic duel. Lincoln had ridiculed James Shields, a Democratic politician, in an anonymous letter in the *Sangamon Journal.* Mary Todd and her friend Julia Jayne — afterwards the wife of Lyman Trumbull — added to the fun by writing other similar letters over the same signature, followed by some verses. Shields was furious, and Lincoln, to protect the women, took the blame of it upon himself. The result was a challenge to fight a duel, in which no blood but much ink was spilled — a performance of which Lincoln had the good sense to be ashamed. He disliked, in later years, any mention of it. On November 4, 1842, he was safely married, tormented by his old morbid misgivings to the very last. He lived at the Globe Tavern, kept by a widow of the name of Beck, paying four dollars a week for board.

Hitherto he had owned a horse, and was fond of riding; but he made a poor income, as he confided to Speed, and was now and then pinched to distress, and went to bed with no notion of how he should meet the claims of the morrow. For nearly one-fifth part of his life he owed money he could not pay, and while of easy disposition, debt galled him and hastened his wrinkles. His marriage, though not without its

jars — as might have been expected between two persons so unlike in temper, training, and habits of life — was in every way advantageous to him. It whetted his industry, did not nurse too much the penchant for home indolence that he had, and taught him, particularly, that there was such a thing as society, which observed a man's boots as well as his principles. He was always a loyal and reverent husband, a gentle but not positive father, and the towering ambition of his wife out-topped his own. It was at the old Globe Tavern that his first son, Robert, was born. Some months later he purchased a house on Eighth Street, formerly owned by a minister, where he made him a home. A narrow yard and palings shut it from the street; the door was in the middle, and was approached by four or five wooden steps; and on the abutment beside these he stood after his nomination in 1860, in a blaze of torches, the thunder of huzzas breaking around him, the only solemn man in Springfield.

III

Returning to Herndon, we find him studying law in the office of "Logan & Lincoln," at the invitation of the junior partner. He was an excellent student and became an able attorney, but he seems never to have liked the law. Herndon was a strange mixture of extremes, complex where Lincoln was simple; a man of no personal dignity, yet gifted and lovable; one moment talking in a lofty strain, and the next telling yarns that smelled of the barnyard; given to escapades of sentiment, yet withal sagacious and astute; impetuous and impulsive, but honest, sincere, and loyal. By nature an enthusiast, a colorist, and a radical, he embraced at one leap all the social reforms, from the abolition of slavery to the right of woman suffrage. That was temperament. All through his career, after it had a beginning, he had a hard fight with the drink habit, with many victories and occasional bitter defeats; a battle which Lincoln watched with never-failing pity. That was environment, very tragical in his case, and characteristic of the period. But Lincoln knew Herndon, his abilities and

his failings, his qualities of mind and heart, and the two men loved each other like brothers of unequal age.

Lincoln was doubtless looking ahead when he induced his young friend to take up the study of law. His money arrangement with Judge Logan was unsatisfactory, especially after his marriage, and he wished to set up for himself or as the head of a firm. Both men were ambitious to go to Congress, and there had been friction. Finally an understanding, more tacit than formal, was reached to the effect that Hardin, Baker, Lincoln, and Logan should each have a turn at the coveted honor. So, at least, we may infer from the letters of Lincoln; but such an agreement, if there was one, did not preclude a friendly rivalry. Lincoln tried to get the nomination in 1842, but was beaten — because of his temperance address, because his wife, as an Episcopalian, a Todd, and akin to the Edwardses, was an "aristocrat," because he had once "talked of fighting a duel," and because he was held to be a deist, if not a sceptic, in religion. There were, besides, "political complications." He was sent as a delegate in behalf of Baker, which was, as he wrote to Speed, "a good deal like a fellow who is made groomsman to a man that has cut him out and is marrying his own dear gal." But Hardin won the nomination, and Lincoln once more stood aside, reluctantly, in 1844, in favor of Baker. At any rate, the reasons for the break between Logan and Lincoln were more financial than political. Two such strong natures could not work together, and in 1843 their partnership was dissolved.

On the same day, September 20th, the firm of "Lincoln & Herndon" was founded, Lincoln generously dividing the earnings equally with his junior partner. Looking back through the years at a partnership which was as much a personal friendship as a business arrangement, Mr. Herndon wrote:

> I confess I was surprised when he invited me to become his partner. I was young in the practice and was painfully aware of my want of ability and experience; but when he remarked in his earnest, honest way, "Billy, I can trust you, if you can trust me," I felt relieved and

accepted his generous proposal. It has always been a matter of pride with me that during our long partnership, continuing on until it was dissolved by the bullet of the assassin Booth, we never had any personal controversy or disagreement. I never stood in his way for political honors or office, and I believe we understood each other perfectly. In after years, when he became more prominent, and our practice grew to respectable proportions, other ambitious practitioners undertook to supplant me in the partnership. One of the latter, more zealous than wise, charged that I was in a certain way weakening the influence of the firm. I am flattered to know that Lincoln turned on this last named individual with the retort, "I know my own business, I reckon. I know Billy Herndon better than anybody, and even if what you say of him is true I intend to stick by him."[1]

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 252.

CHAPTER II

Lincoln & Herndon

No two men were ever more unlike in temper of mind and habits of thought — which was, no doubt, a secret of their long friendship. Lincoln was a conservative, Herndon a radical, but each respected the views of the other, and time taught them that wisdom lay in the middle path. They had, indeed, much in common besides a fraternity of sentiment, a droll humor, and a disregard of details; even resembling each other in ruggedness of frame and angularity of features — both faces wearing the same half-tender melancholy, the result, perhaps, of a lonely pioneer life, a habit of thoughtful abstraction, and a disposition to share the sorrows of mankind.

Some men feel the mystery of the public infirmity like a heavy weight of personal care, and both Lincoln and Herndon were of that quality. Of such stuff reformers are made, but the young man of fiery soul and fluent speech needed the calm and wise restraint of the older and greater man, else he had been a fanatic. And it must be said that Lincoln, though he had within him a slumbering fire, almost volcanic when deeply stirred, had need of such a flaming spirit to keep his faith aglow. He sat, as Herndon said, looking through a brief to the iniquity of slavery, and the moral order of God; but his attitude, if not hopeless, was unhopeful. Already the junior partner was consorting with Abolitionists, reading all the agitators, and advocating the most radical ideas; his senior gravely listening, but unconvinced. To Lincoln the national abomination seemed impregnable, and he had no hope of living to see its entrenchments crumble. Thus, out of their mutual indignations, hopes, and fears they educated themselves, each in his own way — one to a grand abhorrence, the other to a grand agency.

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I

As lawyers they were advocates rather than jurists — "case lawyers," in the phrase of the craft — Herndon being little more than an office-clerk, as he tells us frankly, during the first years of their partnership. Lincoln once said that he selected Herndon as his partner thinking him to be a good business man who would keep his office affairs in order, but soon found that he had no more system than he himself, and was in reality a very good lawyer, " thus proving a double disappointment." No one, least of all Herndon, could reduce Lincoln to any sort of order. But he never forgot to divide his fees with his young partner, paying him his share at once, or leaving it in an envelope marked, " Herndon's half." They kept no books. The firm had a busy though not a lucrative practice from the start, appealing thirty-three cases to the Supreme Court the first year — a good record for even those litigious days. But what was better, the two men worked together as comrades, lightening the drudgery of the office, which both despised, with conversation grave and gay.

Just what position Lincoln held at the bar in these early years is not easy to know. After forming his partnership with Herndon — whose family was large and influential — he extended his practice somewhat, but he did not travel the large circuit, which embraced fifteen counties, until later. Whether on the circuit or at Springfield, where the federal courts were held, he was pitted against men of unusual ability and power, among whom were Stephen A. Douglas, O. H. Browning, Ninian Edwards, E. H. Baker, Judge Logan, and others. Some of these men were abler lawyers than he, especially in cases where the issues hung upon technical refinements and pure points of law — Judge Logan, in this particular, being the ablest man at the bar. This is not to say that Lincoln practiced by his wits, though with all his simplicity and honesty a shrewder mortal has seldom lived. Indeed, he would have been a dangerous man, but for his deep-seated integrity which was ever his ruling trait. He was at his best before a jury,

where his knowledge of human nature, his keen logic, and his gifts of humor and mimicry came into full play, and where his occasional bursts of appeal swept all before him. But the law is a jealous mistress and coy of her favors, nor does she crown those who serve her with divided allegiance.

So far Lincoln was more absorbed in politics than in law. What led him forward, said Herndon, was ambition, " a little engine that knew no rest," which strove not for riches but for political honors. If the fire burned low, his wife, who saw greater things for him than he dared dream, added fuel. In 1844 he was on the Whig electoral ticket, and not only stumped Illinois for Henry Clay, but was invited to Indiana and had the satisfaction of speaking at Gentryville, where he had lived as a boy. Amid such scenes, touched by the changes wrought by time and death, he fell into a mood of melancholy, and expressed his emotions in verse, which, if not poetical in form, was, as he said, poetical in feeling. The defeat of Clay, his political idol, was a hard blow, all the more so after so many portents of victory; but his grief was cooled somewhat by a visit to his hero, who received him with a stately aristocratic courtesy, gracious indeed, but not unmixed, so Lincoln felt, with a certain condescension of manner.

At last, in 1846, he was nominated for Congress, and there followed a contest as remarkable for religious bigotry as for partisan rancor. His opponent on the Democratic ticket was Peter Cartwright, a famous evangelist who rode the Methodist circuit in the pioneer era — a picturesque personality and a native orator of many popular gifts. Not content to assail Lincoln for his temperance address, the fervid exhorter charged him with infidelity — an accusation more serious then than now — going back for proof to the New Salem days, when Lincoln was said to have written a pamphlet attacking the Christian religion after the manner of Thomas Paine.[1]

[1] Such an essay was written by Lincoln in his early days, while under the spell of Volney, Paine, and other thinkers of that school, in which he argued that the Bible was not inspired and that Jesus was not the son of God. He carried it to the village store, where it was read and freely discussed; but his employer, Samuel Hill, snatched the manuscript out of

These tactics so enraged Herndon, who plunged into the fray with all his ardor, that Lincoln had to warn him not to retort in kind, lest in his indignant zeal he do more harm than good. Quietly they organized the Whig forces, using political methods as against religious prejudice, and so thorough was the canvass that a few days before the end Lincoln could say to a friend of the other party, who promised to vote for him if it seemed necessary, "I have got the preacher, and don't need your vote." The Democrats, mistaking sound and fury for a rising tide of sentiment, were sure of a sweeping victory. But it fell otherwise; the "Sangamon Chief," as his friends called him, receiving a majority of sixteen hundred and eleven; a vote greater than his party strength — greater, indeed, than that of Henry Clay two years before. Herndon was jubilant, not more from pride that his partner had been elected to Congress than that the spectre of religious bigotry had been laid.

Thereafter Lincoln was prudently reticent in matters of religion, except to Herndon and other young friends, and even with them he talked guardedly. Superstition, faith, and doubt were strangely blended in him, uniting a sense of iron law with belief in luck and omens as portents of good and evil fortune. So far as is known he formulated no system, though he was quite emphatic in his denial of certain doctrines of the creeds — the atonement, for example, the miracles, and the dogma of eternal hell. But all who stood near him felt that in a poetic and mystic way he was profoundly religious, even if the cast of his mind made many things dim to him which were clear to others. If one would know Lincoln as he was, one must keep in mind his "talent for growth," as Horace Bushnell would say, and watch the slow unfolding of his faith. For surely, as far as a man may, he exemplified the spirit of Jesus in his life, and it is there that one must look for the real religion of the man.

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his hands and put it into the stove. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 149-151.

In his *Autobiography* Peter Cartwright does not mention the canvass of 1846, perhaps because he was not proud of it.

Although elected to Congress in 1846, Lincoln did not take his seat until December, 1847, the only Whig member from Illinois. The Mexican War was in progress and one of his friends, J. J. Hardin, had fallen in the battle of Buena Vista. Accompanied by his wife and two little boys, Robert and Edward, he set out for Washington, leaving Herndon to take care of the practice of the firm. The Thirtieth Congress was an able and industrious body, having for leaders the last of the giants of former days — Webster, Calhoun, Clay, and grand old John Quincy Adams, who died in his seat before the end of the session. Douglas, after a brilliant career in the House, was now for the first time a member of the Senate. From the South, Calhoun, Mason, Hunter, and Jefferson Davis were in the Senate, and Stephens, Toombs, Rhett, and Cobb in the House. Lincoln, at once a favorite for his good-fellowship, was among those invited to the breakfasts given by Webster, where he met Joshua Giddings. Owing to the war-policy of President Polk, the Whigs were in the majority, and, while voting supplies to the army, were trying to make capital out of the victories of their generals in the field. Such a program, however artful, was not without its pitfalls, for it is perilous while the fighting is going on to cavil about a national war, just or unjust. By this method, as the sequel showed, Thomas Corwin dug his political grave in the Senate.

Herndon wrote to Lincoln asking him to send the *Congressional Globe*, assuring him at the same time of the exalted expectations of his friends. In closing his reply, after giving instructions about the payment of certain debts — he was still paying on the old debt incurred by the purchase of the store at New Salem — Lincoln remarked: "As you are all so anxious for me to distinguish myself, I have concluded to do so before long." Herndon wrote an encouraging letter, reporting among other things the rumor of a wish for his re-election. Lincoln's reply must be read:

Washington, D. C., Jan. 8, 1848.

Dear William:— Your letter of December 27 was received a day or two ago. I am much obliged to you for the trouble

you have taken. . . . As to speech-making, by way of getting the hang of the House I made a little speech two or three days ago on a postoffice question of no general interest. I find speaking here and elsewhere about the same thing. I was about as badly scared, and no worse, as I am when I speak in court. I expect to make one within a week or two, in which I hope to succeed well enough to wish you to see it.

It is very pleasant to learn from you that there are some who desire that I should be re-elected. I most heartily thank them for their kind partiality; and I can say, as Mr. Clay said of the annexation of Texas, that "personally I would not object" to a re-election, although I thought at the time, and still think, it would be quite as well for me to return to the law at the end of a single term. I made the declaration that I would not be a candidate again, more from a wish to deal fairly with others, to keep peace among our friends, and to keep the district from going to the enemy, than for any cause personal to myself; so that, if it should so happen that nobody else wishes to be elected, I could not refuse the people the right of sending me again. But to enter myself as a competitor of others, or to authorize any one so to enter me, is what my word and honor forbid. Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

On December 22nd Lincoln had introduced his "Spot Resolutions," so named because after quoting the words of President Polk that the war had been justified by the fact that Mexico had "invaded our territory," and "shed the blood of our citizens on our own soil," they requested the President in a series of adroit questions to inform the House on what *spot* the alleged outrages had taken place.[1] Of course the request, reviving as it did the charge that Polk had tricked the nation into a war at the behest of the Slave Power, met with silence at the White House. Nor was the silence broken

[1] All now agree as to the relation of the Polk administration to the Mexican War. If any doubt had remained, it would have been dispelled by the luminous portrayal of the facts by Dr. Von Holst in his *Constitutional History of the United States*, Vol. III, p. 336. The rebuke administered to the Democratic party, by changing its majority into a minority, deserves, as Von Holst remarks, "to be counted among the most meritorious proofs of the sound and honorable feeling of the American nation."

when, three weeks later, Lincoln called up the resolutions and spoke in their support, demanding that the President reply fully, fairly, and candidly. No action was taken, but the speech served to distinguish its author by exciting the laughter of the Democrats and evoking a murmur of protest in the Whig ranks. Elated by its majority in the House, if not dazzled by the trophies of war, the Whig party had changed front, and preferred to deny rather than to admit that the President had exceeded his power. Others held that, since the war was closing, the criticism was belated. Even his friends at Springfield felt that Lincoln had gone too far when he voted for the Ashmun amendment to the supply bill, which affirmed that the war had been unjustly and unlawfully begun by the President. Herndon, in apprising his partner of the state of sentiment at home, argued that Polk had been justified by a threat of invasion, and that his action was made lawful by necessity. A letter from Lincoln revealed at once his willingness to stake all on a principle and his desire to be understood by his personal and political friends:

Washington, D. C., Feb. 1, 1848.

Dear William:— Your letter of the 19th ultimo was received last night, and for which I am much obliged. The only thing in it that I wish to talk to you at once about is that because of my vote for Ashmun's amendment you fear that you and I disagree about the war. I regret this, not because of any fear that we shall remain disagreed after you have read this letter, but because if you misunderstand I fear other good friends may also.

The vote affirms that the war was "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President;" and I will stake my life that if you had been in my place you would have voted just as I did. Would you have voted what you felt and knew to be a lie? I know you would not. Would you have gone out of the House — skulked the vote? I expect not. If you had skulked one vote, you would have had to skulk many more before the end of the session. Richardson's resolutions, introduced before I made any move or gave any vote upon the subject, make the direct question of the justice of the war; so that no man can be silent if he would. You are compelled to speak; and

your only alternative is to tell the truth or tell a lie. I cannot doubt which you would do.

I do not mean this letter for the public, but for you. Before it reaches you you will have read my pamphlet speech and perhaps have been scared anew by it. After you get over your scare read it over again, sentence by sentence, and tell me what you honestly think of it. I condensed all I could for fear of being cut off by the hour rule; and when I had got through I had spoken but forty minutes. Yours forever, A. LINCOLN.

Herndon remained unconvinced, even after reading the speech sentence by sentence, and continued to argue the question in his letters, but he taxed his wits to allay the discontent in the district. A note from Lincoln, dated the day following the above letter, showed his susceptibility to noble eloquence and the half-melancholy sentiment evoked by it. Although not yet forty years of age, his sorrow-worn spirit looked upon itself as already old and weary:

Washington, D. C., Feb. 2, 1848.

Dear William:—I just take my pen to say that Mr. Stephens, of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man, with a voice like Logan's, has just concluded the very best speech of an hour's length I ever heard. My old, withered, dry eyes are full of tears yet. If he writes out anything like he delivered it, our people shall see a good many copies of it. Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

One who reads that speech today finds it replete with legal and constitutional lore, with moral grandeur and righteous indignation, and tinged with such glimpses of battle and death, and needless suffering and sorrow, that it is no wonder that men wept over the picture.[1] From that time forward Lincoln never ceased to admire Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia. They did not meet again after their days in Congress until the memorable Hampton Roads Conference, in 1865, when Stephens, then Vice-President of the Confederacy, with Campbell and Hunter, met President Lincoln and Secretary Seward in behalf of peace. After traversing the field of official routine to no purpose, Lincoln, still the old

[1] *Abraham Lincoln in 1854*, by Horace White (1908).

Whig colleague, took Stephens aside, and, pointing to a paper he held in his hand, said: "Stephens, let me write 'Union' at the top of the page, and you may write below it whatever else you please."[1] Stephens found Lincoln the same jovial, tolerant, firm friend, but a changed man: — "The Union with him in sentiment rose to the sublimity of a *religious mysticism.*" One of the best pictures of Lincoln in Congress is that left us by Stephens:

> I knew Mr. Lincoln well and intimately, and we were both ardent supporters of General Taylor for President in 1848. Mr. Lincoln, Toombs, Preston, myself, and others formed the first Congressional Taylor Club, known as "The Young Indians," and organized the Taylor movement, which resulted in his nomination. . . . Mr. Lincoln was careful as to his manners, awkward in his speech, but was possessed of a very strong, clear, vigorous mind. . . . He always attracted and riveted the attention of the House when he spoke. His manner of speech, as well as thought, was original. He had no model. He was a man of strong convictions, and what Carlyle would have called an earnest man. He abounded in anecdote. He illustrated everything he was talking about by an anecdote, always exceedingly apt and pointed, and socially he always kept his company in a roar of laughter.[2]

In June the Whigs met in national convention in Philadelphia, and Lincoln attended as a delegate. Henry Clay was still his ideal statesman, but since it had been agreed that a military hero was needed to steal the war-thunder of the Democrats, he supported General Zachary Taylor, dubious as the Whig faith of Taylor was known to be. No platform was adopted, and a resolution affirming as a party principle the

[1] *The Compromises of Life*, by Henry Watterson, pp. 164-6 (1903). This statement has been questioned, but it rests upon the authority of Mr. Stephens himself, who related it to Mr. Watterson, as he did to others, including Mr. Felix de Fontaine, the famous Southern war correspondent, with whom he passed the night in Richmond after he came up from Hampton Roads. This testimony, with the Joint Resolution to be passed by Congress, in Lincoln's handwriting, appropriating money to be paid the South for the slaves, would seem to be abundant evidence.

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by I. N. Arnold, pp. 77, 78 (1884).

Wilmot Proviso — designed to exclude slavery from territory acquired from Mexico — was repeatedly voted down. It was thus evident that the Whigs, like the Democrats, intended to evade the slavery issue, and Lincoln, though a "conscience Whig," seemed willing to leave that question in abeyance for the sake of party advantage. He returned in high hope and set to work zealously to elect the ticket, on which he was named as an elector, predicting victory to his friends and asking them to make Illinois do her part. A gloomy letter from Herndon, reporting extensive defections in the party ranks, pained him, but did not cool his enthusiasm. Instead, he wrote to his partner urging him to organize a band of "Young Indians" in Springfield, and giving specific instructions how to do it:

Washington, D. C., June 22, 1848.

Dear William:— The whole field of the nation was scanned; all is high hope and confidence. Illinois is expeeted to better her condition in this race. Under these circumstances judge how heart-rending it was to come to my room and find and read your discouraging letter of the 15th. Now, as to the young men. You must not wait to be brought forward by the older men. For instance, do you suppose that I would ever have got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men? You young men get together and form a "Rough and Ready Club," and have regular meetings and speeches. Take in everybody you can get. Harrison Grimsley, L. A. Enos, Lee Kimball, and C. W. Matheney will do to begin the thing; but as you go along, gather up all the shrewd, wild boys about town, whether just of age or a little under age — Chris Logan, Reddick Ridgely, Lewis Zwizler, and hundreds such. Let every one play the part he can play best — some speak, some sing, and all "holler." Your meetings will be in the evenings; the old men, and the women, will go to hear you; so that it will not only contribute to the election of "Old Zack," but will be an interesting pastime, and improving to the intellectual faculties of all engaged. Don't fail to do this.

Your friend, A. Lincoln.

But alas, Herndon was too profoundly disgusted with the Whig attitude on the slavery question to have any heart in

the business of organizing a "Rough and Ready Club." Unable to conceal his feelings, he permitted an interview to appear in one of the Springfield papers in which he took a thoroughly disheartened view of the situation, intimating that the Whig party had run its course. He clipped the interview and sent it to Lincoln, accompanied by a letter telling of the dissatisfaction in the district, and reflecting rather severely on certain "old fossils in the party who are constantly keeping the young men down." Just what lay behind Herndon's complaint is not quite clear; but it brought a characteristic reply, valuable for its homely philosophy and as a glimpse of the relations between the two men:

Washington, D. C., July 10, 1848.

Dear William:— Your letter covering the newspaper slips was received last night. The subject of that letter is exceedingly painful to me; and I cannot but think there is some mistake in your impression of the motives of the older men. I suppose I am now one of the older men; and I declare on my veracity, which I think is good with you, that nothing could afford me more satisfaction than to learn that you and others of my young friends at home were doing battle in the contest, and endearing themselves to the people, and taking a stand far above any I have ever been able to reach in their admiration. I cannot conceive that other older men feel differently. Of course I cannot demonstrate what I say; but I was young once, and I am sure I was never ungenerously thrust back. I hardly know what to say. The way for a young man to rise is to improve himself in every way he can, never suspecting that anyone wishes to hinder him. Allow me to assure you that suspicion and jealousy never did help any man in any situation. There may sometimes be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed, too, if he allows his mind to be diverted from its true channel to brood over the attempted injury. Cast about, and see if this feeling has not injured every person you have known to fall into it.

Now, in what I have said I am sure you will suspect nothing but sincere friendship. I would save you from a fatal error. You have been a laborious, studious young man. You are far better informed on almost all subjects than I have ever been. You cannot fail in any laudable object unless you allow your mind to be improperly di-

> rected. I have some advantage of you in the world's experience merely by being older; and it is this that induces me to advise. Your friend, as ever, A. LINCOLN.

Two weeks later Lincoln delivered a speech in the House in behalf of Taylor, in which he attempted to justify the Whigs for trying to make capital out of a war whose injustice and unconstitutionality they had often, and even passionately, denounced. As an example of campaign oratory in the early West, full of stump vigor and racy of the soil, it was admirable, and for its purpose effective, but quite out of place on the floor of the House. Walking up and down the aisles — as a correspondent of the Baltimore *American* described him — gesticulating with his long arms, he mingled drollery, wit, and shrewd party appeals with pitiless satire, clever caricature and outrageous illustration, while both sides roared with laughter. He admitted that he did not certainly know what Taylor, a slaveholder, would do with the Wilmot Proviso, and added: "I am a Northern man, or rather a western Free-State man, with a constituency I believe to be, and with personal feelings known to be, against the extension of slavery. As such, and with what information I have, I hope and believe that General Taylor, if elected, would not veto the Proviso. But I do not know it. *But even if I knew he would, I still would vote for him,*" not only as against General Lewis Cass, the Democratic candidate, but also against Martin Van Buren, the nominee of the Free-Soil and old Liberty parties, whose platform affirmed the principle of the Proviso. Party loyalty could not go further; and from so dubious a position, and the labored and ingenious explanations which it required, he was glad to divert attention by ridiculing the military career of General Cass. Withal, there was an infectious quality in his rollicking burlesque, and a few passages may illustrate a style of speech, at once "Rough and Ready," in which he indulged at times, though less frequently, even so late as 1852:

> But the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Iverson) further says, we have deserted all our principles, and taken shelter under General Taylor's military coat-tail; and he seems

to think this is exceedingly degrading. Well, as his faith is, so be it unto him. But can he remember no other military coat-tail, under which a certain other party have been sheltering for near a quarter of a century? Has he no acquaintance with the ample military coat-tail of General Jackson? . . . Yes, sir, that coat-tail was not only used for General Jackson himself, but has been clung to with the grip of death by every Democratic candidate since. . . . Mr. Polk himself was "Young Hickory," "Little Hickory," or something so; and even now your campaign paper here is proclaiming that Cass and Butler are of the "Hickory stripe." No, sir, you dare not give it up. Like a horde of hungry ticks, you have stuck to the tail of the Hermitage lion to the end of his life; and you are still sticking to it, and drawing a loathsome sustenance from it, after he is dead. A fellow once advertised that he had made a discovery by which he could make a new man out of an old one and have enough of the stuff left to make a little yellow dog. Just such a discovery has General Jackson's popularity been to you. You not only twice made Presidents of him out of it, but you have enough of the stuff left to make Presidents of several comparatively small men since; and it is your chief reliance now to make still another.

Mr. Speaker, old horses and coat-tails, or tails of any sort, are not such figures of speech as I would be the first to introduce into discussion here; but as the gentleman from Georgia has thought fit to introduce them, he and you are welcome to all you have made or can make by them. If you have any more old horses, trot them out; any more tails, just cock them and come at us. . . . By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir, in the days of the Black Hawk war I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass's career, reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterward. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break, but I bent my musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is, he broke it in desperation; I bent my musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon wild onions. If he saw any live fighting Indians, it was more than I did, but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and, al-

> though I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say that I was often very hungry.

Such a harangue, waggish at times almost to the point of buffoonery, is not edifying; still less so when read alongside his solemn, seer-like words ten years later; but it shows us the politician out of which the statesman was made. Some have thought that they could detect a tone of inner protest underneath the exaggerated humor of this speech, as of one who felt the dissonance of his position; but this is the error, into which so many have fallen, of reading his early years in the light of after time.[1] No; it is plain that Lincoln had followed his party into a state of discord with himself, and with his true destiny, of which he was as yet hardly aware, though he began to realize it when he went campaigning for Taylor in New England after Congress had adjourned. For the sentiment in New England with regard to the Mexican war, and the issues involved in it, as vivified by Lowell in "The Bigelow Papers," required something more than burlesque to convince it.

Lincoln spoke at Worcester, Lowell, Dedham, Roxbury, Chelsea, Cambridge, Boston, and other cities, where his inimitable manner, his sagacious party pleas, and his homely humor delighted large audiences. Such reports of his speeches as remain show that he did not at any time rise above mere partisanship, and the Whig press gave him credit for winning back to the fold many who had gone off after "the Free-Soil fizzle." At Worcester, amidst pronounced defection from the party, he argued at length, according to the Boston *Advertiser*, against the charge that Taylor had no political princi-

[1] One of the best studies of the making of Lincoln, tracing the union in him of the Folk-soul and World-spirit, is *Abraham Lincoln*, by D. J. Snider (1908). It is "an interpretation in Biography," as the subtitle indicates, accurate as to fact, often fanciful in inference, but always suggestive of the saying of Socrates, who likened man to a tree whose roots run up into the unseen. Only, as this author sees, in the case of Lincoln the roots ran both ways, down into the rough soil of the early West, and up into that mystical realm whence great souls draw their strength and charm. Hence a medley of haunting beauties and gnarled angularities.

ples; justified the Whigs for putting forth no platform; held the Free-Soil position with regard to the restriction of slavery to be that of the Whigs — a passage he would hardly have risked before the Whig Club at Washington, of which Stephens, Preston, and Toombs were members; ridiculed the single plank in the Free-Soil platform, which reminded him of the Yankee peddler, who, in offering for sale a single pair of pantaloons, described them as "large enough for any man, and small enough for any boy;" criticised the followers of Van Buren for helping to elect Cass, and to their plea for the right and duty of acting independently, "leaving the consequences with God," opposed the doctrine — which he held to the end of his life — that "when divine or human law does not clearly point out what is our duty, it must be found only by intelligent judgment, which takes account of the results of action." Whig papers spoke of the speech as "masterly and convincing," while the Free-Soil report described it as "a pretty tedious affair."

As he went further into New England, however, Lincoln saw the real spirit and nature of the Free-Soil protest. After hearing Governor Seward speak in Tremont Temple, Boston, when they were together at the hotel, he said: "I have been thinking about what you said in your speech. I reckon you are right. We have got to deal with this slavery question, and got to give more attention to it hereafter than we have been doing."[1] On the fundamental issue of the injustice and bad policy of slavery he had never wavered, but beyond the dream of gradual emancipation he saw no way of dealing with it, except to push it back into a corner and let it die. At Washington the question had not seemed imminent or urgent, but in New England it loomed like an ominous shadow upon the

[1] *Life of Wm. H. Seward*, by F. W. Seward, Vol. II, p. 80 (1891). Once in his law practice Lincoln had met the slavery question in a rather embarrassing manner, having been retained by a slave-owner. For a history of this case, showing his half-heartedness in pleading a cause against his conscience, see an article entitled "Lincoln and the Maston Negroes," by Jesse W. Weik, in the *Arena*, April, 1897. Mr. Herndon contributed to the fund provided to transport the negroes to Liberia.

horizon, portentous of impending storm, and the gathering clouds subdued his later speeches to a more serious tone.

So meditating, Lincoln started home late in September, stopping at Albany where, in company with Thurlow Weed, he called on Millard Fillmore; and at Niagara Falls — concerning which he made notes for a popular lecture.[1] At home he found things in a bad way politically, as Herndon had duly forewarned him. The Democrats, determined to capture the district by fair means or foul, were using his opposition to the Mexican war to defeat Judge Logan, who was a candidate for his seat — Lincoln having stood aside for Logan according to agreement.[2] The story was that Lincoln, by voting for the Ashmun amendment to the Supply Bill, had refused to support the army in the field, thereby betraying his country. Of course it was false; but among a people who would rather be warlike than right it was working havoc, and so industriously was it circulated that it lived to confront him in his debates with Douglas ten years later — though for Douglas, who knew better, there was no excuse for such tactics. Thus, while not a candidate for re-election, Lincoln was forced to defend his record in behalf of Judge Logan; and the result showed that he could have had a second term had he sought it. The Whigs carried the district by a decided majority, the defeat of Logan being due chiefly to his own unpopularity, and not, as has been so often stated, to the position of Lin-

[1] Like all travelers Lincoln was impressed by that supendous spectacle, as his notes show; but his comment to Herndon betrayed no more susceptibility to natural grandeur than did Walt Whitman's record of his visit to the scene the same year. When asked what most impressed him when he stood before the Falls, he said: "The thing that struck me most forcibly when I saw the Falls, was, where in the world did all that water come from?" To Herndon, who was an enthusiastic lover of nature in all her moods, this reply was amazing beyond words.

[2] Of such an agreement there is little doubt; the letters of Lincoln show it. Besides, in giving a reason why Lincoln was not a candidate for re-election, J. L. Scripps, his first biographer, says that "this was determined upon *and publicly declared before he went to Washington*, in accordance with an understanding among leading Whigs in the district." — *New York Tribune Tracts*, No. 6, p. 18 (1860).

coln on the Mexican war. Mr. Herndon took little part in the campaign, his sympathies being with the Free-Soil party, but for the sake of his partner he remained a loyal Whig.

While the election of Taylor inspired hopes that the extension of slavery might be checked, as a fact it was the beginning of that re-alignment of forces amidst which, as a penalty for having evaded the supreme question of the age, the Whig party went to pieces. Returning to Washington, Lincoln took a less conspicuous part in the discussions than in the former session; but he stood consistently for a protective tariff, for the right of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories, and for every measure looking toward the gradual emancipation of the slaves which provided compensation to their owners. The Wilmot Proviso had passed the House in the preceding Congress, and had been killed in the Senate. But it reappeared in various shapes, and Lincoln afterwards said that he voted for it in one form or another "about forty-two times" — a reckoning not quite accurate mathematically, but sufficiently expressive of loyalty. Not liking its form, he voted against the Gott resolution asking the Committee for the District of Columbia to report a bill prohibiting the slave trade in the District. When it again came before the House, he offered a measure as a substitute, setting forth what in his view was just and practicable at that time.

This bill forbade the bringing of slaves into the District, except as household servants of government officials who were citizens of Slave States, or selling them to be taken out of the District. It provided that children of slave mothers born after 1850 should be freed, subject to a temporary apprenticeship, and the payment of their full cash value to the owners by the government; fugitive slaves escaping from Washington and Georgetown were to be returned; and, finally, the whole measure was to be submitted to popular vote in the District. So staunch an Abolitionist as Joshua R. Giddings supported this measure, thinking it "as good a bill as we can get at this time," and on the further ground that it would save a few slaves from the Southern market. Lincoln actually secured a promise of aid from W. W. Seaton, editor of

the *National Intelligencer* and mayor of Washington, which gave some hope of success. But Southern Congressmen, fearing the bill as an entering wedge, won the mayor to their side, leaving Lincoln and Giddings unable even to bring their bill to a vote.

On the whole, Lincoln seems to have enjoyed his life in Congress, where he attracted notice by his quaint simplicity of manner, as when he was seen carrying books from the Library of the Supreme Court tied in a handkerchief slung over his shoulder. What marred his peace was the clamor of importunate office-seekers, which increased after the Whig victory until it became an annoyance, not without entanglements. The defeat of Judge Logan left the patronage of the district in his hand, and even after his term had expired he was often besought to use his influence to obtain, as he termed it, "a way to live without work." Apparently he was more successful in obtaining office for others than for himself, owing, as Herndon explains, to a certain unconscious sense of superiority and pride which unfitted him to be a suitor for place. Having lost interest in the law, along with all hope of future political preferment, he tried to obtain the appointment as Commissioner of the General Land Office, but failed. This was a keen disappointment, after he had taken so active a part in the nomination and election of Taylor. He was, however, offered the Governorship of the new Territory of Oregon, and made a special trip to Washington to discuss the subject. He had half a mind to accept, but his wife emphatically vetoed the suggestion, and, as Herndon adds, "that always settled it with Lincoln." Years later he was reminded that had he gone to Oregon, he might have come back as Senator, but never as President. "Yes, you are probably right," he replied, and then in a musing, dreamy tone, as if talking to himself, he added: "I have all my life been a fatalist. What is to be will be, or rather, I have found all my life as Hamlet says:

> "'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will.'"[1]

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by I. N. Arnold, p. 81 (1884).

No doubt it was a divinity, shaping his end, that sent him back to Springfield and out on the muddy roads of the old Eighth Circuit, a saddened, disillusioned, and disappointed man. Politically, he seemed to himself, indeed, and to his friends, a man without a future; but that was less important than the fact that he was not prepared for the future that awaited him. Even at forty he was singularly immature; he had not yet come to a full mastery of his powers; and the conflicting elements in his nature needed to be melted and fused into a more solid unity. As has often been pointed out, this came at last with the emergence in him of a vein of mysticism, which, with his fine sagacity and his humane pity, more and more swayed him, softening all that was hard within and hardening all that was soft. Of this we are sure: when he returned to public life in 1854, as a living voice of a great cause, he was a changed man, moving with a firmer tread, in one way simple and frank, but in another a separate and detached soul — as one whose eye was set on some star visible to himself alone.

II

After an absence of nearly three years — having been immersed in politics since 1846 — it was with some reluctance that Lincoln resumed the practice of law. His term in Congress had made him widely known in the State, but more as a stump-speaker and politician than as a lawyer, and he had now to begin almost anew and make his way at the bar. He declined a partnership in a Chicago law firm, offered by Grant Goodrich, on the ground that he had a tendency to consumption and feared the effect of city life upon his health. He liked best the journeying life of the circuit, its freedom, its comradeship, with the human comedy of country taverns, and if he earned smaller fees he felt much happier. Mr. Herndon writes:

> Of course, what practice he himself controlled passed into other hands. I retained all the business I could, and worked steadily on until, when he returned, our practice was as extensive as that of any other firm at the bar. Lin-

> coln realized that much of this was due to my efforts, and on his return he therefore suggested that he had no right to share in the business and profits that I had made. I responded that, as he had aided me and given me prominence when I was young and needed it, I could afford now to be grateful if not generous. I therefore recommended a continuation of the partnership, and we went on as before. I could notice a difference in Lincoln's movement as a lawyer from this time forward. He had begun to realize a certain lack of discipline — a want of mental training and method. Ten years had wrought some change in the law, and more in the lawyers, of Illinois. . . . There was, of course, the same riding on circuit as before, but the courts had improved in tone and morals, and there was less laxity — at least it appeared so to Lincoln. Political defeat had wrought a marked effect in him. It went below the skin and made a changed man of him. He was not soured by his seeming political decline, but still he determined to eschew politics from that time forward and devote himself entirely to the law. And now he began to make up for time lost in politics by studying the law in earnest. No man had greater power of application than he. Once fixing his mind on any subject, nothing could interfere with or disturb him. . . . It is proper to add that he detested the mechanical work of the office. He wrote few papers — less perhaps than any other man at the bar. Such work was usually left to me for the first few years we were together. Afterwards we made good use of students who came to learn the law in our office.[1]

Nor did Lincoln confine himself to the study of law, keenly as he felt the need of a more thorough familiarity with its philosophy and history. His stay in Washington, and particularly his visit to the East, had made him aware of the defects of his early training, and more than once he remarked to Herndon — a student by nature and a wide reader by habit — that the "mast-fed lawyer," as he described himself, must have a broader basis and a better method if he was to compete with the college men who were coming to the West. Native wit and a flow of words would no longer win at the bar. More solid qualities were required, and he began a course of rigid mental discipline with the intent to improve

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. 1, pp. 307-312.

his faculties, especially his powers of logic and of language. Hence his fondness for Euclid, which he carried with him on the circuit until he could with ease demonstrate all the propositions in the six books; often studying far into the night, with a candle near his pillow, while his fellow-lawyers, half a dozen in a room, filled the air with interminable snoring. In the same way he undertook German, but seems never to have attained a working mastery of it. Shakespeare and the Bible he read devotedly, parts of them many times, as much for their simple, sinewy, virile style as for their wealth of high and beautiful truth. This study of great books bore fruit in a more delicate literary instinct, a finer feeling for words, and the florid, fiery rhetoric in which he had indulged in his early years became an aversion. Therefore his advice to Herndon, which that ardent man, much given to lofty metaphor, could neither follow nor forget:— "Billy, don't shoot too high — aim lower and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach. The educated and refined people will understand you any way. If you aim too high your ideas will go over the heads of the masses, and only hit those who need no hitting."[1] Years of such training made him a master of lucid, direct, vivid statement, whether he was arguing a case in a justice court or pleading a cause in the national forum. As one of his friends said, without waste of words he could put more flesh on the skeleton of an idea than any other man of his day.

Mid-summer found Lincoln absorbed in the law, preparing for work on the circuit in the autumn. It was probably at this time that he began making notes of cases and authorities in a quaint little memorandum-book which he carried in his

[1] Reports of Lincoln's reading vary, and it is not easy to know the facts. Herndon says that he read less and thought more than any other man of his day, while others seem determined to graduate him from a university. The truth lies mid-way, perhaps, as Prof. Dodge has shown in his study of *Abraham Lincoln: The Evolution of His Literary Style* (1900). He was not a wide reader, apart from the newspapers, but he read carefully, assimilating the essence of a few great books. His habit of committing to memory bits of poetry made his range of reading appear more extensive than it really was.

pocket, and which on the circuit served as a ready reference when it was not possible to consult law reports.[1] His figure, garbed in black, was familiar in Springfield as he strode along, usually with one of his boys struggling to keep up, between his home on Eighth Street and his office on the Square. The office of the firm was on the second floor of a brick building just across from the court house — a large back room, afterwards divided into two rooms, with windows overlooking stable-roofs, ash-heaps, and dingy back yards. Two baize-covered tables, a few chairs, a cot, an old fashioned "secretary," and a book-case containing perhaps two hundred law-books, made up the furnishings. Few books were needed, as the state-house library was nearby for reference when other sources of information failed. Rarely has an office been conducted with less method. Lincoln carried most of his memoranda in his high "stove-pipe" hat, together with bits of poetry and other items clipped from the newspapers, of which he was an assiduous reader — sometimes to the annoyance of his partner. Often he would have to hunt for lost documents, and upon one of the bundles which littered his desk he wrote, "*When you can't find it anywhere else, look in this.*" What order there was came when some student clerk, unable to endure the confusion, undertook to sweep the room and sort the papers. Several years later John H. Littlefield, in cleaning up the office, found a quantity of Congressional garden seed mixed with Whig speeches and Abolitionist pamphlets, and some of the seed had sprouted in the accumulated dirt. He has left us vivid memories of the two men, both of whom had minds too broad and grave for the details of life.

In many partnerships there is one man who is all gentleness and geniality, who would if he could; and another man on whom devolves the rough work; whose "No" is all the harder for the air of mild benignity which sits so well on his colleague. One who attends to the nether side of the practice must be content to be thought harsh and unapproachable, to

[1] This memorandum-book is now in the possession of Mr. Jesse W. Weik, of Greencastle, Indiana, to whose courtesy and kindness all Lincoln students are indebted.

THE LINCOLN & HERNDON LAW OFFICE

[*By courtesy of D. Appleton & Co.*]

be misunderstood, if not maligned. The firm of "Lincoln & Herndon" lacked such a man, neither partner having the saturnine grimness, or the brusque aloofness, for such a part; though Herndon would have made a better attempt at it had not his partner, who loved men more than money, interfered. If he brought suit for a fee and obtained judgment, the victim would hunt up Lincoln and by means of a skilfully woven tale of distress secure release. Lincoln made such small charges for his services that Herndon, and even Judge Davis, expostulated with him, but to no purpose. He could not be induced to sue for a fee, except in rare instances when a client, able to pay, was obviously trying to defraud the firm. Though his name appears in the Illinois reports in one hundred and seventy-three cases, his income was never more than two or three thousand dollars a year. Twice in later years — as attorney for the Illinois Central Railway Company, and in the McCormick reaper patent litigation — he received what were then called large fees; but during the first four years after he left Congress he was often hard pressed for money. His father had moved three times, and when he died in 1851, there was a mortgage on the farm in Coles County to be raised, his mother to help, and a shiftless step-brother to advise in letters plain-spoken and quaintly wise. But he worked hard, and rapidly developed into one of the best trial lawyers in the state.

Law practice was more difficult then than now, by reason of the dearth of authority and the necessity of reasoning out cases upon original principles. Young men, especially, were at a disadvantage in intricate cases, and the habit was general of employing leaders of the bar from a distance. Hence the circuit-riding practice. Local attorneys were retained to work up the cases and prepare the papers awaiting the arrival of the journeying bar, from among whom litigants would select their champions. Such a practice was admirably suited to the peculiar genius of Lincoln, relieving him of details, which he detested, and giving free play to his powers of logic, of strategy, and of humor. While, as a lawyer, he was not learned, all agreed that he was able, skilful, and just, singu-

larly lucid in stating a case, courteous but searching in examining witnesses, forceful and sagacious in argument, and when the case turned upon human or moral issues one of the most persuasive advocates at the bar. Quick in taking cases into his mind, having a remarkable memory for evidence, if he found beneath the facts a human principle, his heart warmed in the work of developing it. At times he would seclude himself while revolving some question raised by a village client, which had expanded into a great human problem, and he never failed to present it so vividly that dull minds grew alert and shrewd ones absorbed. His presence was commanding, with a certain modest dignity not easily defined, and the spell of his marvelous personality gave him a subtle, almost occult power over juries. Sometimes, though not often, his humor won the case, as when he rebutted a charge of trespass by an inimitable description of the perplexity of a wandering pig which found the fence of the plaintiff so crooked that it invariably came out on its own side. But he was not always mild, not always funny, and when he was angry it was a terrible spectacle. Outside the court room he talked politics, told stories, played pranks, and now and then slipped away from his fellows to walk alone, with his lips close shut, softly humming, and returned strangely sad and exhausted.

Twice a year, spring and autumn, the lawyers started out on the circuit, following the train of Judge David Davis, massive and able, and Lincoln seems to have been almost the only one who went the rounds of the circuit. Herndon was out with him about one-fourth of the time — long enough to learn that life on the circuit was a gay one, and that Lincoln loved it — and he has left us vivid pictures of dramatic court scenes, of famous murder trials, of parleying lawyers and lying witnesses; of the *camaraderie* of country taverns where judge and jury, lawyers and litigants, and even prisoners, sat at table together; of a long, gaunt figure stretched upon beds too short for him, his feet hanging over the foot-board, his head propped up, poring over the Elements of Euclid; of story-telling jousts that continued, amidst roars of laughter, far into the night. Herndon looked after the business in

Springfield, while Lincoln, when he set out on a tour of the circuit, which kept him away for months, continued to the end, rarely returning home to spend the Sabbath with his family.

> Nothing could be duller than remaining on the Sabbath in a country inn of that time after adjournment of court. Good cheer had expended its force during court week, and blank dullness succeeded; but Lincoln would entertain the few lingering roustabouts of the barroom with as great zest, apparently, as he had previously entertained the court and bar, and then would hitch up his horse, "Old Tom," as he was called, and, solitary and alone, ride off to the next term in course. One would naturally suppose that the leading lawyer of the circuit, in a pursuit which occupied nearly half his time, would make himself comfortable, but he did not. His horse was as raw-boned and weird-looking as himself, and his buggy, an open one, as rude as either; his attire was that of an ordinary farmer or stock-raiser, while the sum total of his baggage consisted of a very attenuated carpetbag, an old weather-beaten umbrella, and a short blue cloak reaching to his hips — a style which was prevalent during the Mexican War.[1]

Reminiscence lies warm upon the life of Lincoln; upon no part of it, perhaps, so warmly as upon these circuit-riding years. Books dealing with this period glow with picturesque and humorous memories,[2] leaving the impression that what joy there was in a life destined to great sacrifice was found on the old Eighth Circuit. Too often he has been portrayed, perhaps unconsciously, as a mere story-teller, which was as far as possible from the truth, though it is true that his humor was brightest when his heart was most forlorn. That may account, in part, for the memories of these years of poverty, obscurity, and baffled ambition, humor being his re-

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. C. Whitney (1892).

[2] Of these, *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln*, by W. C. Whitney (1892), is doubtless the best, though it has been criticized as exploiting a kind of Damon and Pythias intimacy between Lincoln and Whitney, of which the old Illinois friends of Lincoln were unaware; *Abraham Lincoln*, by I. N. Phillips, Appendix (1901); while the legal aspects of the circuit-riding practice have been admirably portrayed by F. T. Hill, *Lincoln the Lawyer* (1906).

laxation from irksome toil without and pressing thoughts within. But he was fundamentally serious and a man of dignity, and while men spoke of him as "Old Abe" behind his back, in his presence they indulged in no uncouth familiarities. His humor — and it was humor rather than wit, for he was essentially a poet and a man of pathos — lay close to that profound and inscrutable melancholy which clung to him and tinged all his days — the shadow, perhaps, of some pre-natal gloom, woven in the soul of his mother, and deepened, no doubt, by a temperament which felt the tragedy in mortal things. It was not for his humor that men loved him, nor yet for his intellect with its blend of integrity and shrewdness, which all admired, but for his manliness, his simplicity, his sympathy, and for much else which we feel even now and cannot put into words. To this day, men who were close to Lincoln have a memory as of something too deep for speech. They recount his doings, they recall his words, they laugh at his stories, but they always leave something untold: only a light comes into their eyes, and one realizes what a well-founded reverence is.

Of the inner life of Lincoln during these buried years — from 1849 to 1854 — few glimpses remain, but they are enough to show that it was a time of revolution and crisis. Mentally he was occupied as never before with those questions which every man, soon or late, must settle for himself; that he met and made terms with them is certain, but by what process we know not. What we do know is that he loved the old Eighth Circuit and the comradeship of the men with whom he journeyed. There he traveled with Leonard Swett, Judge Logan, E. H. Baker, O. H. Browning, Richard J. Oglesby, John M. Palmer, and others, and the friendships formed were enduring. It is not too much to say that it was "a small group of fellow-practitioners on the Eighth Circuit — Davis, the judge; Swett, the advocate; and Logan, the leader of the bar, but especially Davis — who forced Lincoln upon the Chicago Convention in 1860, and thus gave him to the nation."[1] Nor do we forget that it was largely the

[1] *Lincoln the Lawyer*, by F. T. Hill, p. 195 (1906).

influence of old associations, which he could never entirely resist, that led him, in 1862, to appoint Judge David Davis Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. To the end of his life, amidst the whirl of politics and the storm of war, those circuit-riding days were invested for him with a grave and joyous memory.

III

Those were great days in the National Senate, where the giants of a former era were wrestling with the problem which was to rend the nation. Voices of union and disunion clashed and echoed afar: Calhoun calling for war in the name of the South; Webster, for the sake of the Union, turning his back on the cause of Abolition; Seward announcing a law higher than that even of the Constitution; Douglas manœuvering for advantage; and central among them all, the fiery, pathetic, fascinating figure of Clay, using all the resources of his genius, and all the influence of his extraordinary personality, in behalf of National Unity. It was the end of an epoch, the last effort of the old masters, in conflict with new leaders, to solve a riddle which had vexed the Republic from the earliest years.

Out of the stormy debate, which strained the nation to its utmost tension, emerged the Compromise of 1850, the valedictory triumph of Henry Clay.[1] By the terms of that compact, California became a free State; Utah and New Mexico were organized as Territories, without attaching to them the proviso excluding slavery; North Texas was to be reorganized,

[1] Henry Clay died feeling that the principle of Compromise was triumphant, and his closing eyes saw little sign of the storm clouds in the sky. The main purpose of his life, he declared, was not that one often accredited to him—to be elected President—but that expressed in the words: "If any man desires to know the leading and paramount object of my public life the preservation of the Union will furnish him the key." — *Henry Clay*, by T. H. Clay (1910). "In later years it was recalled as a matter of dramatic significance that Henry Clay, 'Compromise incarnate,' tottered from the Senate chamber for the last time the day that Charles Sumner, 'Conscience incarnate,' entered its doors." — *Charles Sumner*, by G. H. Haynes (1910).

and slavery extended over it; and Texas was to be paid ten million dollars for her relinquishment of New Mexico. Also, the domestic slave trade was prohibited in the District of Columbia, and a new Fugitive Slave Law, cruel and stringent in its provisions, was to be enacted. This measure was held to be a master stroke of domestic diplomacy, and the leaders drew up and signed a paper to the effect that there should be no more agitation, and pledging each other to oppose any men who should mar the peace of the land. So once more, it was fondly believed, that tormenting shade had been put to its final rest.

We who are wise after the fact wonder why more men of that day did not discern, what is now so obvious, that the dualism of the nation could not endure. Into the heart of the Compact of 1850 had crept the fatal principle of non-interference by Congress with slavery in the Territories, which was destined, under the seductive title of "popular sovereignty," with Douglas as its champion, to undo the healing work of years. Added to this was the growing tendency in the South, complained of by Webster, to regard slavery, not as it was regarded in the early days of the Republic, *as an evil to be gradually extinguished, but as an institution to be cherished, and preserved, and extended.*[1] Other causes contributed to the alarm in the minds of far-sighted men, chief among them being the passionate, palpitating feeling which found voice in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe — whom Lincoln once introduced as "the little woman who caused the war" — which began as a serial in the *National Era* in 1851. That flaming story revealed, in the light of a flash, what a crucifying edict the Fugitive Slave Law was to many people in the North. Many felt that because it was the law of the land they must not resist it, but

[1] See *Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and Secession*, by B. B. Munford (1909), a book of real original research based upon a careful study of historical sources—manuscripts, public records, and newspapers—in which the reactionary attitude of Southern men is shown to have been largely due to the agitation of radical Abolitionists in the North. The book is valuable for its point of view and its armory of facts.

obey it they could not. Such was the mood of the nation, aggravated by a temperance crusade and the beginnings of the Know-Nothing fanaticism, when it entered the campaign of 1852.

Seldom have political parties appealed to the country with a less vital issue than that over which the followers of Franklin Pierce and General Scott were divided. Both parties, securely muzzled by the Slave Power, vied with each other in courting the Southern vote, by insisting, in their platforms, that the Compact of 1850 was final, and that the Fugitive Slave Law must be enforced. Despite the flow of rhetoric about union and prosperity, all who had eyes to see knew that it was a campaign of futile evasion. Newspaper wits are often prophets. One sceptic expressed in verse his doubts about the various attempts to kill the slavery question, which were indeed not unlike the policy of the ancients who conceived of the earth as flat and resting upon the back of a tortoise, which in turn reposed upon a coiled serpent. When asked about the serpent, they declared an end of inquiry and said it was all right any way. Hence the misgivings of the wit:

> To kill twice dead a rattlesnake,
> And off his scaly skin to take,
> And through his head to drive a stake,
> And every bone within him break,
> And of his flesh mince-meat to make;
> To burn, to sear, to boil and bake,
> Then in a heap the whole to rake,
> And over it the besom shake,
> And sink it fathoms in the lake,
> Whence after all quite wide awake
> Comes back that very same old snake.[1]

Lincoln emerged from his obscurity long enough to make a few languid speeches for Scott and to pronounce a eulogy of Henry Clay, who died in June of that year. His speeches in behalf of Scott were marked more by jealousy of Douglas — then for the first time a national figure, pampered, flattered, and pluming himself for the Presidency — than by any real interest in the party. When invited by the Whig Club

[1] Quoted in *Abraham Lincoln*, by E. P. Oberholtzer, p. 82 (1904).

of Springfield to reply to a speech made by Douglas in the South, he was almost petulant of temper from first to last. He had no heart in the business; his humor, when not strained, was at times coarse; and even Herndon, always an admirer, admitted that the effort was flat and unworthy of its author. Of his eulogy of Clay, while it was in no sense a great speech, more may be said. It was much more than a perfunctory memorial. He was still loyal to his hero, still under the charm of that "long-enduring spell" which had bound the souls of men not only to Henry Clay but to the cause of the Union; and this gave glow and color to his tribute. He upheld the position of Clay as against that of the Abolitionists on the one hand, and of those — increasing in number — on the other, who sought to perpetuate slavery, and were beginning to assail the "charter of freedom, the declaration that all men are created free and equal." No allusion was made to the Compromise of 1850, which he apparently accepted regretfully as one accepts something less than the best. Clearly he had come to see that the slavery issue could no longer be compromised, but he still hoped that some plan of gradual emancipation and colonization might be devised. Yet what a fearful looking for, of judgment to come, was foreshadowed in his closing words!

Only a few men, said Edmund Burke, really see what is passing before their eyes, and Lincoln was one of them. By nature a watcher of the signs of the times, he did not read them amiss, but he was slow to admit, even to himself, the bitter truth as he saw it. The words of Calhoun in the Senate two years before still echoed in his ears; and what he feared more than all else was a clash between the radicals of the North and the hotspurs of the South, and a rush to arms. When John T. Stuart, his former partner, warned him that the time was coming when all men would have to be either Abolitionists or Democrats, he replied ruefully but emphatically: "When that time comes my mind is made up." But he hoped, almost against hope, that the time would not come, for he regarded the Abolition movement as an erratic crusade, led by moral idealists rather than by

practical men. None the less he brooded over the abyss, often gloomily, nor did he see any way out of the depths into which the nation seemed to be rushing.

Herndon voted the Whig ticket in 1852, swearing eloquently and picturesquely that he would never do so any more. Yet no doubt he would have voted it again, had the party lived to put a ticket in the field; for with all his wild words, he had a certain dog-sagacity, as he confessed, which suspected his own enthusiasms, and made him rely upon the calm, slow, sure logic of his partner. At times he would try to prod Lincoln out of his tardy conservatism, descanting fervently on the needs of the hour, only to receive the reply: "Billy, you're too rampant and spontaneous." Their relations were free and easy without being familiar, and the attitude of Herndon was that of a younger brother toward one whom he loved, but whose greatness he felt and admired. At the same time Lincoln was becoming every day more serious, more solitary, more studious than ever before. Mr. Herndon writes:

> I was in correspondence with Sumner, Greeley, Phillips, and Garrison, and was thoroughly imbued with all the rancor drawn from such sources. I adhered to Lincoln, relying on the final outcome of his sense of justice and right. Every time a good speech on the great issue was made I sent for it. Hence you could find on my table the latest utterances of Giddings, Phillips, Sumner, Seward, and one whom I considered grander than all of the others — Theodore Parker. Lincoln and I took such papers as the Chicago *Tribune*, New York *Tribune, Anti-Slavery Standard, Emancipator*, and *National Era*. On the other side of the question we took the Charleston *Mercury*, and the Richmond *Enquirer*. I also bought a book called "Sociology," written by one Fitzhugh, which defended and justified slavery in every conceivable way. In addition I purchased all the leading histories of the slavery movement, and other works which treated on that subject. Lincoln himself never bought many books, but he and I both read those I have named. After reading them we would discuss the questions they touched upon and the ideas they suggested, from our different points of view.[1]

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 32.

All that year and the next — 1853-4 — this study went on at odd hours, in the midst of a practice always busy, and rapidly becoming lucrative, until they knew the subject from both sides, through and through, from end to end. This fact should be kept in mind by those who seem to think that Lincoln was led by intuition rather than by brains, and that his speeches were made as if by magic. These country lawyers canvassed the slavery question in all its phases, and when they had finished no conceivable aspect of it had escaped them. One arrived at truth by swift flashes of insight, the other by a slow and labored process; but when they arrived they stood together, and nothing could move them. During this time Herndon served as mayor of Springfield to the credit of himself and his city, while his partner was as indifferent to local affairs as he was to the beauty of trees and flowers.

CHAPTER III

"The Genius of Discord"

I

History had dealt severely with Stephen A. Douglas for the part he played in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, in 1854. Of that Compact he had said, some years before, that it was " canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb." Yet he it was who made that Compact null and void, opening Pandora's box and letting loose again the furies of sectional discord which all hoped had been laid and locked up. Whatever may have been his motives — and they are as muddy today as they were then — he precipitated a revolution, and became the avant courier of Civil War.

While it is true that Senator Douglas did not originate the Repeal, yet as the leader of his party he not only accepted the fatal amendment,[1] but boasted of it as his work and the master feat of his career. Drawn further than perhaps he had intended to go, he was forced to follow if he was to retain his leadership, much less his hope of the Presidency. So astute and sagacious a politician could not have been unaware of the temper of the country and the peril of his course. He, himself, had prophesied it in 1850. Yet so obsessed was he by his ambition that he was deaf to the voices of protest heard while the Bill was brewing in Congress, and plunged into a policy of madness which, as some of his best friends warned him, sealed his political doom. Adroitly and persuasively he

[1] Strangely enough, the amendment to repeal the Missouri Compromise was introduced by Senator Archibald Dixon, of Kentucky, a Whig who had been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Henry Clay. — *The True History of the Missouri Compromise and its Repeal*, by Mrs. A. Dixon (1899). It was the irony of fate that the work of Clay should be undone by his successor.

tried to justify himself by appeal to his elastic dogma of "popular sovereignty," which had apparently taken such hold of him as to obscure his mind, otherwise clear. That dogma would have meant, in its ultimate logic, that there could be no slavery without the consent of the slaves; but it became in his hands only another form of that *referendum* whereby politicians seek to evade issues and shift responsibility.[1] When tested on the prairies of Kansas it proved to be "squatter sovereignty," enacting a wearisome story of rump legislatures, fraudulent constitutions, and outrages at the polls, from which Douglas himself revolted. Whatever may have been the motives of Douglas, the Repeal was an act of political suicide for himself and a tragedy for the nation.

It has often been noted, as an instance of how great things hang upon small things, that it was a sleepy old game of whist that led to the repeal of the Compact of 1820. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill was framed, so runs the story, to make a Territory immediately west of Missouri, which David R. Atchison was to go and organize and bring in as a State; so returning to the seat in the Senate he had lost, and back to the sleepy old game of whist whose players loved and missed him. The country itself, resting in the belief that slavery was in course of ultimate extinction, was more than half asleep. But when the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was introduced[2] there was a rude

[1] Concerning the acrobatics of Douglas much has been written, and many have been the theories as to his motives. Perhaps the best discussion of the whole subject, from all sides, is *The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise: Its Origin and Authorship*, by P. Orman Ray (1909). There all the circumstances are recalled without heat or passion, and if the question of motive is not settled it is because it must remain a puzzle. See *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, Chap. XI (1908). Some of the motives attributed to Senator Douglas by polemical writers are incredible; he was unwise, but he was neither stupid nor vicious.

[2] Of the seventy Democrats in the Illinois Legislature, then in session, only three were in favor of the Bill. Two days later orders came from Douglas that resolutions be passed endorsing it, and so complete was the "flop" that only three Senators stood out against it. Those three were John M. Palmer, Norman Judd, and B. C. Cook, nor could they be whipped into line. See *History of the Republican Party*, by F. A. Flower (1884).

awakening, and when it became a law there burst forth such a blaze of protest as had not been seen in the land since 1776. This move was unexpected by the masses of the people, and a proposition to repeal the Constitution could hardly have stirred the nation more deeply. So daring an act filled the North with amazement, which quickly deepened into furious indignation, and men everywhere felt the fear, the hope, and the dread of impending upheaval. The signs were unmistakable. No mere party or faction arrayed itself against the scheme; the moral force of the North was against it. At last it was clear that the supreme question, now reopened by the insanity of the slave-holding interest and its allies, had to be settled if the Republic was to endure. No longer was it a sleepy old game, but an " irrepressible conflict " destined to rage with ever increasing force until slavery was destroyed in the flames kindled by its own folly.

Amidst the confusion only one thing was certain, and that was that the barrier which had excluded slavery from the territory in question had been swept away. The " stump-speech injected into the belly of the Bill," as Senator Thomas H. Benton called it, declared the policy to be applicable to any State or Territory. Consternation reigned, and no one could tell what a year might bring forth. Whigs and Democrats of anti-slavery sentiments, who had long been deaf to the appeals of Abolition leaders, began to organize themselves into a new party to defeat the men who had wrought this mischief. In Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio they assumed the name Republican; everywhere they were known as " Anti-Nebraska men," drawn together by a common determination to resist the attempt of the South to seize and enslave Kansas. In Illinois, however, the movement was slower. Many discordant elements delayed fusion, especially in the southern counties where opposition to Douglas was regarded with the more disfavor because it was associated with bolting Democrats and Abolitionist extremists.[1] But in the northern

[1] For the movements of Abolitionists in Illinois, see "Anti-Slavery Agitation in Illinois," by Z. Eastman, in Blanchard's *History of Illinois* (Old Edition). And more recently, *Negro Servitude in Illinois*, by N. D.

counties, settled chiefly by folk of New England origin, it was different. In Chicago, pulpit and press were arrayed against the Repeal — particularly the pulpit, which turned the city blue and sulphurous in its damnation of Douglas. Literal fire was also used to burn him in hundreds of effigies, by whose light he once said himself he could travel all the way from Illinois to the Atlantic.

Two or three days after his arrival in Chicago, Senator Douglas announced that on the night of September 1st, he would speak in front of North Market Hall. All that afternoon flags were at half mast on lake boats, and when the crowds began to gather church bells were tolled, as though some great public calamity impended. When Douglas began to address the people, at a quarter past eight, he was greeted with groans, jeers, and hisses. He paused until these had subsided, but no sooner did he begin again than pandemonium broke loose. Interruption was something that he could never brook good-naturedly, and he appeared at a grave disadvantage and in no conciliatory mood, amidst the rapid fire of questions aimed at him. For over two hours he wrestled with the noisy crowd, appealing to their sense of fairness; but he could not gain a hearing. "Finally, for the first time in his life, he was forced to admit defeat. Drawing his watch from his pocket and observing that the hour was late, he shouted, in an interval of comparative quiet, '*It is now Sunday morning — I'll go to church, and you may go to Hell!*' At the imminent risk of his life, he went to his carriage and was driven to his hotel."[1] After Douglas left, some one announced that Abra-

Harris (1904). This last volume sifts a vast mass of material and gives the winnowed result, and is interesting in its account of Abolitionist journalism in the State.

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas: A Study in American Politics*, by Allen Johnson, p. 259 (1908). "I was on the platform as a reporter," writes Mr. Horace White, "and my recollection of what happened is still vivid. There was nothing like violence at any time, but there was disorder growing out of the fact that the people had come prepared to dispute Douglas's sophisms and that Douglas was far from conciliatory when he found himself facing an unfriendly audience." — *Lincoln in 1854*, by Horace White, p. 9 (1908).

ham Lincoln, who had come in during the evening, would reply from the same platform.

II

Lincoln was losing interest in politics, as we learn from his oft-cited "Autobiography," when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise roused him. He was out on the Eighth Circuit when the news of the Repeal came, and Judge Dickey, who shared his room at the local tavern, reports that Lincoln sat on the edge of the bed and discussed the political situation until far into the night. At last Dickey fell asleep, but when he awoke in the morning Lincoln was still sitting up in bed, deeply absorbed in meditation. "I tell you, Dickey," he said, as though continuing the argument of the previous evening, "*this nation cannot exist half-slave and half-free!*" In one variant or another, this phrase began to recur in his letters and in his office conversation, which Herndon tells us became more animated and earnest. In his eulogy of Clay he had quoted something very like it, though in less sententious phrase, from Jefferson; but the words did not then have the force of tragic reality. Now "the Genius of Discord" had done its work, and he saw the republic a house divided against itself and tottering to a fall. Still, for four years he kept his slogan in his heart, ruminating upon it and discussing it with his friends, waiting for the ripening of events.

At Chicago he made plea for a return to the Missouri Compromise, and in public he clung to that forlorn hope until the Dred Scott decision swept it away. But in his private thought he knew, as he said to Herndon, that the two forces, long kept apart like wild beasts chained, each growling and struggling to be free, meant inevitable conflict. Nor did any one who stood near him doubt on which side his sympathies were, though he held himself in reserve, coming forward to speak and act only when he was fully satisfied that the hour was ripe. Often his feelings — intense and almost volcanic at times — pressed hard for hot words and radical measures, but he bit his lips, to use his own language, and kept quiet, jotting down notes on scraps of paper and stowing them in his high

hat — the handy receptacle for items to which he desired to have ready access. Some of these fugitive notes have been preserved, and they show with what keen and merciless logic he had gone to the bottom of the subject — passing the whole question through his silent thought, as though it were a case to be stated and argued. When at last he spoke his word, the whole man was in it, and the issue and the leader were alike disclosed.

Such was the mood in which Lincoln, now forty-five and in the prime of his powers, stood up to refute the dogma of Douglas and to challenge its champion. By a kind of instinct men recognized the new leader, and made way for him, though at the time there was no organized party, but only a few friends, to urge him forward. Just when he resolved to try again for office is not known; but it must be kept in mind that while Lincoln was a politician, wary, discreet, and shrewd, he was never a professional politician.[1] That is, he did not live by holding office, but by the arduous labors of the law, and he returned to politics only at the call of a crisis — goaded also, it seems, by his ambitious little wife, who had been most unhappy during his subsidence. If he was a master of all the arts of politics, he brought them to the service of a great human cause, his very jealousy of Douglas serving the better to point his logic with tips of fire.

Early in October Senator Douglas delivered a speech in the State House at Springfield, during the week of the State Fair, to which, on the following day, in the same hall to no smaller audience, Lincoln addressed a reply. The occasion, notable in many ways, was in fact the beginning of a debate between the two men, memorable in the annals of the nation, which continued at intervals for five years. Douglas was at

[1] Perhaps this fact, though noted by some of his biographers, has not been sufficiently emphasized. — *American Commonwealth*, by James Bryce, Vol. II, p. 68. Of the $200 contributed by his friends for his use in the canvass of 1846, he returned $199.90 unused. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by G. H. Putman, p. 16 (1909). In later years, besides contributing to the campaign fund, often to his own financial hurt, his friends contributed to his expenses. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 71.

this time the most striking figure in the public eye — the most popular leader since Henry Clay — and in view of the estrangement of a large part of his constituency, he put forth all his powers of persuasion. He defended the Nebraska Bill by appeal to his panacea of "popular sovereignty," which, he said, only sought to establish in the Territories a policy already existing in the States. Why, he asked, should not the people of the Territories have the right to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way? Moving from their old homes to new ones did not incapacitate them for self-government. If the citizens of a Territory decided by vote to admit slaves as property, no State had a right to interfere. After this manner he argued, using all the arts at his command, and in ordinary times his eloquence would have been conclusive; but he had reckoned by the wrong star. His political compass, never very steady, had been deflected, perhaps unawares, by the subtle attraction of personal and partisan interest. His fallacy lay in the assumption that property in slaves did not differ from other kinds of property; and that the nation could deal with an historic evil by evasion. None the less his speech, delivered with great vitality and charm, swayed men by its blend of plausibility and power.

It was therefore upon no ordinary occasion that Lincoln found himself pitted against his old adversary — his rival on many occasions and for many things. Much interest attached to his reply, not only from the fact that he was crossing swords with a famous debater, but because he was a candidate against James Shields — his old dueling antagonist — for the Senate; and for the further reason that such a discussion involved, necessarily, a survey of slavery in all its phases. While he was known to be a Whig of anti-slavery leanings, up to this time there had been no demand that he declare himself on that question as a national political issue. He had now to define his position, and he did not hesitate to tell the plain truth, so far at least as the public mind was ready for the whole truth; and the telling of it made his speech one of the imperishable utterances of that critical

period, if not of our whole history. When he had finished men of all parties realized that a new leader had appeared, the equal of Douglas in debate, calm, strong, and fearless, with a sure grasp of the problem — a man of genius ablaze with passion.

For four hours the circuit-riding lawyer unfolded and described the great issue with a mastery of facts, a logical strategy, and a penetration of insight that astonished even his friends. Evidence of careful study was apparent in the compactness of his thought and the lucidity of his style, and there was a total absence of the story-telling, of the grotesque humor, which had marred his earlier efforts. There were occasional playful passages, keen logical thrusts and bright metaphorical sallies, but as a whole the speech was charged with deep feeling, the speaker becoming at times intense and solemnly prophetic as the far-reaching nature of the issue was unveiled. Unlike the Abolition orators, he did not recite the cruelties of slavery, but held himself to the legal aspects of the question, arraigning Douglas and his party for violating the pledge of the Compromise, and for opening the way for the extension of slavery into new territory. While he did not plead for the abolition of slavery, he had none of the spirit of concession to property interests that had ruined Webster, and he spoke as one to whom the moral issue was vividly alive. Restrict slavery, he argued, and time would work its abolition by natural process. For the pet dogma of Douglas he had a profound scorn, and his epigrams pierced it like flashes of lightning. He turned it over and over, inside and out, tearing off its mask and exhibiting it in such a light that no one could fail to see the deception embodied in it. No political dogma ever received a more merciless exposure, while the Senator himself sat on a front bench, not twelve feet away, intently listening. There were warm, but for the most part good-humored passages between them as the afternoon ran along. Lincoln kept his temper, even under the most provoking taunts, and his readiness and ease of retort delighted the immense audience. It was a great triumph, and thunders of applause greeted him; but what impressed men was the gran-

itic solidity of his argument, made luminous by a passionate earnestness all the more effective for its restraint. One who was present has left this picture of the orator:

> It was a warmish day in early October, and Mr. Lincoln was in his shirt sleeves when he stepped on the platform. I observed that, although awkward, he was not in the least embarrassed. He began in a slow and hesitating manner, but without any mistakes of language, dates, or facts. It was evident that he had mastered his subject, that he knew what he was going to say, and that he knew he was right. He had a thin, high-pitched, falsetto voice of much carrying power, and could be heard a long distance in spite of the bustle and tumult of the crowd. He had the accent and pronunciation peculiar to his native State, Kentucky. Gradually he warmed up with his subject, his angularity disappeared, and he passed into that attitude of unconscious majesty that is so conspicuous in Saint-Gaudens's statue at the entrance of Lincoln Park in Chicago. . . . Progressing with his theme, his words began to come faster and his face to light up with the rays of genius and his body to move in unison with his thoughts. His gestures were made with his body and head rather than with his arms. They were the natural expression of the man, and so perfectly adapted to what he was saying that anything different would have been quite inconceivable. Sometimes his manner was very impassioned, and he seemed transfigured with his subject. Perspiration would stream down his face, and each particular hair would stand on end. . . . In such transfigured moments as these he was the type of the Hebrew prophet.
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> I heard the whole speech. It was superior to Webster's reply to Hayne, because its theme is loftier and its scope wider. . . . I think also that Lincoln's speech is the superior of the two as an example of English style. It lacks something of the smooth, compulsive flow which takes the intellect captive in the Websterian diction, but it excels in the simplicity, directness, and lucidity which appeal both to the intellect and to the heart. The speech made so profound an impression on me that I feel under its spell to this day.[1]

When Lincoln closed, Owen Lovejoy, the leader of the Abolitionists — then holding a convention in the city — announced

[1] *Lincoln in 1854*, by Horace White, pp. 9-11 (1908).

a meeting in the same place that evening of all the "friends of liberty," with a view to organizing the Republican party in Illinois, as it had already been organized in Wisconsin and Ohio. The scheme was to induce Lincoln to address them, and thus publicly to commit him as of their faith. But the astute Herndon, though in their counsels and as radical as any of them, was more of a politician, and knew the danger to Lincoln of consorting just then with Abolitionists. So he hunted up his partner and said: "Go home at once! Take Bob with you and drive somewhere in the country, and stay till this thing is over." Lincoln, always alert and politic, did take Bob in his buggy and drove to Tazewell County, where Judge Davis was holding court. Thus he escaped the dilemma, since either joining, or refusing to join, the Abolitionists would have been perilous in view of the approaching contest for the Senatorship.

Herndon, however, had difficulty in explaining to some of his fellow radicals why his partner had such urgent "business" in Tazewell County. Among these was Mr. Z. Eastman, editor of the *Western Citizen* — an Abolitionist paper — who remained for some time uncertain as to the real position of Lincoln on the slavery question.[1] But Owen Lovejoy and Ichabod Codding — two ministers with hearts aflame — were so sure of Lincoln that they put his name on a list of members of a Republican State Committee without consulting him. Some time later Lincoln received a notice from

[1] Later Mr. Eastman visited Springfield and had an interview with Herndon — the mediator between Lincoln and the radicals — in order to assure himself and his friends as to Lincoln's real views. He reports Herndon as saying: "Lincoln has been an attentive reader of your paper for years; he believes in the Declaration of Independence, and. . . .is well posted. That he might get all sides of the question, I take Garrison's *Liberator*, and he takes the *National Era*, and the *Western Citizen*. Although he does not say much, you may depend on it, Mr. Lincoln is all right; when it becomes necessary, he will speak so that he will be understood." At the Bloomington convention, May 29, 1856, he did speak in no uncertain sound. "After that," adds Mr. Eastman, "there was no longer any opposition to Lincoln from the most radical of the Abolitionists."—"Anti-Slavery Agitation in Illinois," in Blanchard's *History of Illinois*, p. 671 (Old Edition).

Codding to attend a meeting of the committee, and replied by asking why his name had been used without his consent.[1] He was anxious, however, that his radical friends should understand his position, which was that when he refused to go faster than a certain pace it was with a view to final victory, not to surrender. From first to last he was for the ultimate extinction of slavery, and he waited only for means. What reply Codding made, if any, is not known; but we know that Lovejoy, when elected to the Legislature, voted for Lincoln for Senator.

Twelve days after the encounter during the State Fair the two rivals met in joint debate at Peoria, where Douglas spoke for more than three hours in presenting his side of the case. He followed the outline of his Springfield address, ringing the changes on "popular sovereignty," and approaching dangerously near to bathos when at the close, as a bait for Whig votes, he pictured himself as standing beside the death-bed of Webster and receiving the patriotic mantle of that ascending statesman. To those who recalled how he had fought that giant with all the weapons of partisan warfare, such an appeal must have been amusing. Those were the days when the interest of audiences was equal to the endurance of orators, and when it came Lincoln's turn to be heard it was supper time. Whereupon he told the people that his argument would not be less lengthy, and asked them to repair to their

[1] In 1858, in the joint debate in Ottawa, Douglas read what purported to be a resolution passed by this "Black Republican" convention of 1854, demanding the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and with an air of triumph applied it as a blister to Lincoln, whose name was found on the list of committeemen. It turned out, however, that his friend C. H. Lanphier, of the *State Register*, who had furnished the information, had given him a resolution passed by a small convention in Kane County. The Springfield resolution contained no such demand. Lincoln, who found out the truth and applied the blister to Douglas at Freeport, always believed that Mr. Lanphier had substituted the bogus resolution to help T. L. Harris in his race for Congress against Richard Yates, and had forgotten the circumstance. It is not necessary to charge Mr. Lanphier with bad faith in this instance. Nor was Douglas a party to the trick, though, as the sequel showed, he was a victim of it. — *Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, pp. 65-73, 87-93 (1860).

provision baskets and return at seven, announcing that Senator Douglas was to reply. After a scene which resembled a picnic, the audience re-assembled, and he repeated the substance of his Springfield effort, but in an improved form, both as to compactness of argument and austerity of style. In later years he regarded his Peoria address as in some respects the ablest he had ever made, and since he wrote it out — entirely from memory, for he did not use notes — and published it in successive numbers of the *Sangamon Journal*, it can be read to this day. While it contained a few of the catch phrases which in his later speeches became bywords of popular use, it was by far the most clear-cut and masterly forensic utterance of that year, if not of the whole slavery debate.

Many elements entered into the speech to make it notable, one of which was the spirit of sympathy and justice shown towards the people of the South, against whom Lincoln had no unkindly feeling. Long usage and interest, he knew, had influenced their judgment, just as like usage and interest would have influenced the judgment of the people of the North. He did not hold them solely responsible for slavery, nor did he suggest any plan whereby they might rid themselves of it, but he was emphatic in his belief that, instead of becoming aggressive for its extension, they should by this time have devised some system of gradual emancipation. Equally emphatic was his plea for the humanity of the negro, for proof of which he appealed to the Southern people themselves, many of whom were restive under slavery and so tender-hearted that they must needs employ others to manage their slaves. If he was too politic to push this point to indiscreet length, he left no doubt as to his feeling that slavery was morally wrong, both to master and man, as well as to the nation. Indeed, just because it was a national sin — in which North and South were involved in a common historic guilt — the whole Union was bound to protect the new Territories from infection by it. New Territories were held in national trust, not merely for the first settlers who might wish to carry slavery with them, but for the millions who would eventually settle or

be born there. Unsuited by climate and soil for slave-labor — which economic necessity had segregated to the South — those broad expanses must be kept as an asylum for the poor white people who wished to find homes where their labor would not be degraded by contact with slavery. The Nebraska Bill, so far from being a Union-saving measure, had already filled the nation with vehement antagonism which would only be intensified by further attempts to extend slavery. Actual events, then transpiring in Kansas, were heralds of civil strife, and with the abandonment of the spirit of mutual concession and compromise there was no hope of peace. He therefore urged that the Missouri Compromise be restored as a basis of negotiation between the sections. The speech was statesmanlike in its scope and grasp, incisive but dignified in language, though weakened somewhat at the close by too much attention to the quibbles of Douglas. As this was the first elaborate survey of the question by Lincoln that has come down to us, a few passages may illustrate its spirit and style:

> Before proceeding let me say that I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses North and South. Doubtless there are individuals on both sides who would not hold slaves under any circumstances, and others who would gladly introduce slavery anew if it were out of existence. We know that some Southern men do free their slaves, go North and become tip-top Abolitionists, while some Northern ones go South and become most cruel slave-masters.
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> When the Southern people tell us that they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we are, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists and that it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the same. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. *If all earthly power were given me I should not know what to do with the existing institution.* My first impulse would be to free all the slaves and send them to Liberia, to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me that whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be

in this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. . . . But all this, to my judgment, furnishes no more excuse for permitting slavery to go into our own free territory than it would for reviving the African slave trade by law.

Equal justice to the South, it is said, requires us to consent to the extension of slavery to new Territories. That is to say, inasmuch as you do not object to my taking my hog to Nebraska, therefore I must not object to you taking your slave. Now, I admit that this is perfectly logical, *if there is no difference between hogs and negroes.* But while you thus require me to deny the humanity of the negro, I wish to ask whether you of the South, yourselves, have ever been willing to do as much? . . . The great majority, South as well as North, have human sympathies, of which they can no more divest themselves than they can of their sensibility to physical pain. These sympathies in the bosoms of the Southern people manifest, in many ways, their sense of the wrong of slavery, and their consciousness that, after all, there is humanity in the negro. . . . And now why will you ask us to deny the humanity of the negro, and estimate him as only the equal of a hog?

The doctrine of self-government is right,— absolutely and eternally right,— but it has no just application as here attempted. . . . But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government — that is despotism. . . . *No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent.* I say this is the leading principle, the sheet-anchor, of American republicanism.

But Nebraska is urged as a great Union-saving measure. Well, I too go for saving the Union. Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any great evil to avoid a greater one. But when I go to Union-saving, I must believe, at least, that the means I employ must have some adaptation to the end. To my mind, Nebraska has no such adaptation. "It hath no relish of salvation in it." It is an aggravation, rather, of the only thing which ever endangers the Union. When it came upon us, all was peace and quiet. The nation was looking to the forming of new bonds of union, and a long course of peace and prosperity seemed to lie before us.

In this state of affairs the Genius of Discord himself could hardly have invented a way of again setting us by the ears but by turning back and destroying the peace measures of the past. The counsels of that Genius seem to have prevailed. The Missouri Compromise was repealed; and here we are in the midst of a new slavery agitation, such, I think, as we have never seen before. . . . The Missouri Compromise ought to be restored. For the peace of the Union, it ought to be restored. . . . If by any means we omit to do this, what follows? Slavery may or may not be established in Nebraska. But whether it be or not, we shall have repudiated — discarded from the councils of the nation — the spirit of compromise; for who, after this, will ever trust in a national compromise? The spirit of mutual concession — that spirit which first gave us the Constitution, and which has thrice saved the Union — we shall have strangled and cast from us forever.

And what shall we have in lieu of it? The South flushed with triumph and tempted to excess; the North betrayed as they believe, brooding on wrong and burning for revenge. One side will provoke, the other resent. One will taunt, the other defy; one aggresses, the other retaliates. Already a few in the North defy all constitutional restraints, resist the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, and even menace the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. Already a few in the South claim the constitutional right to take and hold slaves in the free States — demand the revival of the slave-trade. . . . But restore the Compromise, what then? We thereby restore the national faith, the national confidence, the national feeling of brotherhood. We thereby reinstate the spirit of concession and compromise, that spirit which has never failed us in past perils, and which may be safely trusted for all the future.

The South ought to join in doing this. The peace of the nation is as dear to them as to us. The memories of the past and hopes of the future, they share as largely as we. It would be on their part a great act — great in its spirit, and great in its effect. It would be worth to the nation a hundred years' purchase of peace and prosperity. And what of sacrifice would they make? They only surrender to us what they gave us for a consideration long, long ago; what they have not now asked for, struggled or cared for; *what has been thrust upon them, not less to their astonishment than to ours.* . . . Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us purify it. Let us turn and wash it

> white in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution. Let us turn slavery from its claims of "moral right" back upon its existing legal right of "necessity." Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it, and there let it rest in peace. . . . Let North and South — let all Americans — let all lovers of liberty everywhere join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but we shall have so saved it as to make and to keep it forever worthy of the saving.

So amazed was Douglas at the skill and power of his opponent that he is reported to have said to Lincoln, flatteringly: "You are giving me more trouble in debate than all the United States Senate; let us both stop and go home."[1] To this Lincoln,

[1] This incident, known as the "Peoria Truce," has long been in dispute among the biographers of Lincoln and Douglas. "Aside from the palpable improbability of this 'Peoria Truce'," writes Prof. Johnson, "it should be noted that Lincoln accepted an invitation to speak at Lacon next day, without so much as referring to this agreement." — *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 266. But in this he is manifestly in error, as there is now ample proof that Lincoln cancelled the Lacon engagement. The following report of a conversation between Mr. Gowdy and Senator Douglas, for which I am indebted to Mr. Horace White, is in point:

New York, Dec. 7, 1908.

My Dear Mr. White:

In 1891, in his office in Chicago, Mr. Gowdy told me that Judge Douglas spent the night with him at his house preceding the first day of his debate with Mr. Lincoln; that after the evening meal Judge Douglas exhibited considerable restlessness, pacing back and forth upon the floor of the room evidently with mental preoccupation. The attitude of Judge Douglas was so unusual that Mr. Gowdy felt impelled to address him and said: "Judge Douglas, you appear to be ill at ease and under some mental agitation; it cannot be that you have any anxiety with reference to the outcome of the debate you are to have with Lincoln; you cannot have any doubt of your ability to dispose of him!"

Whereupon Judge Douglas, stopping abruptly, turned to Mr. Gowdy and said with great emphasis: "Yes, I am troubled, deeply troubled, over the progress and outcome of this debate. I have known Lincoln for many years and have continually met him in debate. I regard him as the most difficult and dangerous opponent that I have ever met, and I have serious misgivings as to what may be the result of this joint debate." These in substance, and almost in exact phraseology, are the words repeated to me by Mr. Gowdy. Faithfully yours,

FRANCIS LYNDE STETSON.

If we assume, adds Mr. White, that this happened at Peoria in

always gullible through his feelings and unable to refuse a polite request, agreed, to the undisguised astonishment of his friends. The next day they went to the town of Lacon where they were announced for speeches, but Douglas declined to speak on the ground of hoarseness, and Lincoln refused to take advantage of "Judge Douglas's indisposition." Lincoln went directly home where he was met by a company of friends — including Herndon, William Jayne, Ben. F. Irving, William Butler, and others — who chided him for being so susceptible to palaver. He afterwards said to Herndon, "It's a fortunate thing I wasn't born a woman, for I cannot refuse anything, it seems." Douglas, instead of going home, stopped at Princeton, where he collided in debate with Owen Lovejoy; and when afterwards charged with a breach of agreement, he explained that Lovejoy had "bantered and badgered" him until he had to speak in self-defense. But the explanation did not satisfy Lincoln, and his opinion of Douglas, never very high, dropped several degrees. Indeed, the one injustice of which Lincoln was capable was injustice to Douglas, who, however, did not fail upon occasion to recognize the worth of his opponent.

As a result of the election the "Anti-Nebraska men" had a majority in the Legislature, and Lincoln had so planned his meetings with Douglas as to make himself an inevitable candidate for the Senate. He himself had been nominated for the Legislature — against the wishes of his wife, who was dreaming of higher honors — by the Whigs and also by the Know-Nothing party, a committee of whom waited upon him to assure him of their support. Their interview was soon ended. "Who are the native Americans?" asked Lincoln pointedly. "Do they not wear the breech-clout and carry the tomahawk? We pushed them from their homes and now turn upon others not

October, 1854, all the requirements of the incident are fulfilled, because Mr. Gowdy resided at Peoria at that time. Nor was there any subsequent joint debate between the two men at or near Mr. Gowdy's residence. While the letter does not allude to the "truce," it does show Douglas's state of mind in reference to Lincoln's equipment for the debate in 1854 and his apprehension as to the result. No doubt the state of the public mind also had something to do with Douglas's proposal to hush the debate.

fortunate enough to come over here so early as we or our forefathers. Gentlemen of the committee your party is wrong in principle.'' He then told a story of an Irishman who said that he wanted to be born in this country, but his mother would not let him, and the delegation departed.[1] In spite of this rejection of Know-Nothing support he was elected by a large majority, with Judge Logan his former partner, to represent Sangamon County. Skill, tact, and political capacity were his in rare degree, and he at once set to work to win the Senatorship. During the anxious interval between the election and the assembling of the Legislature ''he slept with one eye open,'' as Herndon puts it, watching the scene and planning for the contest.

Those who imagine that Lincoln waited for honors to be thrust upon him do not know the man whom Herndon, his partner, knew. He not only resigned from the Legislature in order to enter the race for the Senate, but wrote letters to the members whom he personally knew, soliciting their votes. Others he sought to reach through the influence of friends, especially E. B. Washburne, Jacob Harding, and Joseph Gillespie. The ''Anti-Nebraska'' majority was not only small but heterogeneous and discordant, and the result was uncertain. Douglas was moving heaven and earth to re-elect Shields who had voted for the Nebraska Bill, and some of the Anti-Nebraska men voted for Shields on the ground of personal friendship. Governor Joel A. Matteson — non-committal on the issue — was also a candidate, and drew others away. On a rainy day the Democrats, by a secret understanding, had elected one of their number to succeed Lincoln, and that made the tangle more intricate. Still, Lincoln might have won the prize but for the obstinacy of three insurgent Democrats — John M. Palmer, Norman Judd, and B. C. Cook — who would on no account vote for a Whig. Steadfastly they voted for Lyman Trumbull, who was a Democrat on every subject but the slavery issue. On the tenth ballot, amidst great excitement [2]

[1] *Iowa Historical Record for 1896*, p. 497.

[2] For a description of the scene and the details of the balloting, see *Lincoln in 1854*, by Horace White, pp. 15-19 (1908).

and after a formidable show of strength, Lincoln, rather than see a Nebraska man elected, asked his friends to support Trumbull. They did so — Judge Logan shedding "natural tears" as he transferred his vote — and Trumbull was elected. As for the Democrats, they were doubly chagrined that Trumbull, whom they regarded as an arch traitor, should be made Senator, and that Palmer, Judd, and Cook should carry off the prize. Writing to E. B. Washburne the day after the election, Lincoln said:

> I regret my defeat moderately, but am not nervous about it. I could have headed off every combination and been elected had it not been for Matteson's double game — and his defeat now gives me more pleasure than my own gives me pain. On the whole, it is perhaps as well for our general cause that Trumbull is elected. The Nebraska men confess that they hate it worse than anything that could have happened. It is a great consolation to see them worse whipped than I am.

III

In the meantime — that is, since the joint debates between Lincoln and Douglas — Lovejoy, Codding, Herndon and others, had been working to bring about a more compact and cohesive fusion of the anti-slavery forces. They had a clear view of what was needed, but the state of sentiment in the central and southern counties was such that they were compelled to move with caution, feeling their way. All recognized Lincoln as the leader, by virtue of his genius and power, but he moved too slow for some and too fast for others, while holding himself somewhat aloof. In this way Herndon was placed in a position as difficult as it was important, where he had to assure impatient and impetuous radicals that Lincoln was sound in the faith, without compromising him with others to whom the word Abolitionist was the most hateful word in the language. Such a position required all his tact, restraint, and cunning, and it is but just that the nature and value of his services be recorded.

He was, besides, a voluminous letter writer, corresponding

with Garrison, Phillips, Giddings, and other leaders in the East, but most frequently with Theodore Parker, of Boston — his ideal theologian, reformer, and orator. For years he had been an admirer of Parker, reading all his sermons and addresses, some of which he induced Lincoln to read—particularly the "Discourse Occasioned by the Death of Daniel Webster," which Lincoln thought was too severe on Webster. The eloquence of Parker was of a kind that appealed to Herndon — vehement and redundant with frequent purple patches, but bold, fearless, earnest, and vivid; for the pressure of many activities gave him little time to polish his sentences. This style was in part deliberate with Parker, especially at this period, with the intent to awaken the people. When the Nebraska Bill passed, and even before it passed, the pulpit of Music Hall became a sounding board for indignation, as before it had been for the protest against the Fugitive Slave Law, and his voice had no uncertain ring. Whereupon the western lawyer was moved to write to the great preacher, expressing his hearty sympathy, asking for books to read, and telling of the way the wind was blowing in the West. His first two letters were after this manner:

Springfield, Ill., May 13, 1854.

Mr. Parker.

Sir:—I wrote to you once when I first became acquainted with your writings. I then had but a few of them, I now have them all. My attachment to the sentiments is stronger. I may say I am *pulled* to them. A few days since I wrote to Messrs. Crosby & Nichols to send me two books — one on spiritualism and the other on materialism — and knowing your tastes I preferred your judgment to others. I hope you will choose the two best books, and they will send. If you will send me a list of books of your taste, known for deep, rich benevolence, strong, energetic and massive language, I will send and get. I love this peculiar kind of eloquence. May I say you are my ideal — strong, direct, energetic, charitable.

Your attention to this will much oblige me. Yet, if too much trouble, do not do so. I did not in my letter to you give the proper direction — superscription — and for which I now offer apology. Yours truly,

W. H. Herndon.

Springfield, Ill., June 11, 1854.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—I received yours of May 22nd and your sermon on "Old Age." I am under many obligations to you both for letter and sermon. Let me say that I do you and Emerson, or rather truth, some good here. I have made presents of your sermons and some of Emerson's rather than not have them read. I hope you will write out your New York speech and your late Boston sermon. The country needs moving with an eloquent and enthusiastic power. If you write out and publish please send me a copy.

Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

What part Parker had in stirring up the people about slavery after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is familiar to all. With astonishing assiduity he went through the Northern States, enlightening and rousing the people with ponderous lectures that were orations, sermons, arguments, historical disquisitions, harangues, all in one, winning for himself the title of "chaplain extraordinary of the anti-slavery movement." His lecturing field touched the Southern border, and once, at least, lapped over — at Wilmington, Delaware, where he was received with threats and sent away with a vote of thanks.[1] Herndon wrote asking him to visit Springfield and deliver one or more lectures the following winter; and receiving no reply he wrote again:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 5, 1855.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—Some few weeks since I wrote you a short letter asking you therein some questions. The question asked was this: Can you come out here this winter and deliver us some lectures? We have a good hall and all conveniences. The letter has not been answered. It may never have reached you. . . . I know you cannot afford to come out to deliver one or two lectures at any one place, but if you can get several places you can. . . . Please answer.

Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

P. S. Our Legislature is now in session. Anti-Nebraska men are all elected — those who fill the offices of speaker, clerks, etc.— a perfectly clean sweep of slaveites and rum men.

[1] *Theodore Parker*, by O. B. Frothingham, pp. 376-440 (1874).

But Parker was too much engaged to promise a visit, having become entangled with the courts as the result of an attempt to rescue a fugitive slave, named Anthony Burns — a kind of pastoral work which had been a feature of his ministry since 1842.[1] The story of the rendition of Burns, and of Parker's efforts to prevent it, would easily fill a book; but it failed. The prisoner was marched out of Boston, over the spot where Garrison had been dragged "by gentlemen of property and standing" in 1835, while multitudes looked on, summoned by a placard written by Parker "to turn out and line the streets and look upon the shame and disgrace of Boston." Not for this, but "for obstructing, resisting, and opposing the execution of the law," Judge B. R. Curtis — who afterwards opposed the Dred Scott decision of Judge Taney — charged the grand jury to indict those who had offended. Indictments were found against Parker, Phillips, T. W. Higginson, and four others, and the hearing was set for April 3, 1855. Hence the "trial" referred to by Parker in his brief reply to Herndon:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 15, 1854.

W. H. Herndon, Esq.

Dear Sir:—Your former letter attended to in the note of the 7th inst. came to hand and was immediately answered; but mine miscarried, I suppose. It would give me great pleasure to visit Springfield (and other towns in the West), but I have no time. My "trial" takes place in March, and I make no engagements after that, for who knows where I may be! Unless we exterminate slavery there is no freedom possible. We are doing well in Massachusetts just now. Thanks to Illinois for her good heart. Yours truly,

THEO. PARKER.

[1] Much of Parker's time was spent in such activities, brief references to which occur in his Journals. But for the whole story we must go to his sermons and letters, which fell like leaves from a tree. One picturesque memorial of these labors is a scrap-book, now in the Boston Public Library—"Memoranda of the Troubles Occasioned by the Infamous Fugitive Slave Law from March 15th, 1851, to February 19th, 1856,"—half of which is made up of posters, evidently written by Parker himself, warning fugitives of danger and summoning their friends to the rescue. When he spoke on this subject his words took fire and blazed like sky-rockets.— *Theodore Parker*, by O. B. Frothingham (1874). Also *Theodore Parker, Preacher and Reformer*, by J. W. Chadwick (1900).

These letters — now to be interwoven with the present study — continued to pass to and fro at varying intervals until December, 1859, when Parker broke down and became a wandering seeker after health. Excerpts from the letters of Parker appeared in his biography [1] by John Weiss in 1864, which is now out of print, but the letters of Herndon have never before been published. They have to do with the men, movements, and events, the hopes, fears, and dreams, of a critical and stormy period — the period, that is, of the rise of Lincoln, of his debates with Douglas, and of his election to the Presidency —and they let light behind the political and social scenes of those years, sometimes in a startling manner. Their characterizations of men are definitive and apt; their criticisms of leaders, particularly of Douglas and Greeley, are sharp, often to the point of injustice; while their prophecies of coming events are, at times, almost uncanny. Both men wrote with the freedom and abandon of private correspondence, without mincing words, and their letters, especially those of Herndon which are longer and more numerous, are valuable as revelations of themselves and their period. It is here that we discover, as only letters can disclose, what manner of man Herndon was — his crudities and refinements, his indignations, his enthusiasms, his egotism and his self sacrifice, his love of books, of nature, and of man, his swift and vivid intellect, and his heart of fire. One who reads these letters feels that Lincoln was wise when he decided to "stick by Billy Herndon," no matter what his enemies said against him.

Replying to the brief note from Parker about his trial, Herndon wrote at once expressing sympathy and assurance of victory, reporting at the same time the election of Trumbull to the Senate. He also enclosed a clipping from the *Sangamon Journal,* a report of his valedictory speech as mayor of Springfield, from which it appears that he had been active in behalf of municipal economy, while purchasing grounds for school buildings in each of the wards and enforcing a prohibitory ordinance against the dram-shops. He wrote:

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker,* by John Weiss, in two volumes (1864).

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 13, 1855.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—I am sorry you cannot come out west and lecture for us. You have, however, a good excuse. Your trial comes on in March and I hope you will attend to it as you do to all things. Blast slavery if you can — aid freedom to stand erect, and with the forces of nature floating everywhere man will yet evolve goodness and develop greatness along the lines of time and in the realms of faith. I know nothing I desire more than [the] freedom and elevation of my brother man. These can never be accomplished while wrong rules; tyranny or freedom must dominate. They are now struggling. I have no fears as to which will triumph. I know.

Hope you will get good counsel and attorneys with yourself and go to trial and there have good reporters — make speeches and send out to the world for us young men to read and inhale — human rights *drunk* in.

During the election here and before, I took the stump and did all I could for freedom — aided the press, wrote late and early.[1] All I wish is, that I could do it over every November of my life. I knew during the election that if the people would take their stand on their religiousness of soul that would be all right. They took that stand and Illinois stands redeemed. Douglas can no more control Illinois than a Hottentot chief can. We are free. When we can look one another in the face and talk on the question without evasion or "eye-dropping" you may know all is right. We are in that condition. I may not go as far as some, yet so far as I go I am fixed.

You are aware that Judge Trumbull is now our U. S. Senator. He was elected in place of General J. Shields. He is anti-Nebraska; anti-Douglas. He was our Judge of Supreme Court before whom I have often spoken in the capacity of lawyer. He is a good man, no demagogue, and a personal enemy of Douglas. This is more than the press can tell you. Great thorn, rough and poisonous, in the heart of Douglas. My opinion — *I suppose* — that Trumbull has pledged himself to vote against the admission of all and

[1] Herndon was, as he here says, a prolific writer of editorials, especially for the *Sangamon Journal*, edited by his friend, Simeon Francis. He quotes from some of them in his biography of Lincoln. (Vol. II, p. 378.) Examples of his editorial work will be given later from those hitherto unpublished. Lincoln also used the papers in the same way, anonymously, though less frequently.

every Slave State and for repeal or modification of the Fugitive Slave Bill.

Our Legislature has passed a Maine law — I am for it as you may suppose — to take effect if the people vote for it. I think they will. They will north and here, but Egypt — good gracious! Passed or about to pass a law to give the blacks their tax money to appropriate to schools, as our law does not allow blacks to come to school with whites.

After your trial is over I hope you or others will publish in book form the speeches made for you and the evidence in your case, or containing the whole case, and send out to the world. I have not two of your speeches or sermons made in New York, I think in New York, and would like to have them very much. One was published in the *Times* some time in March or April, 1854, and the other I have heard of. If you will send them I will pay you somehow or other. I am surprised at running this letter out, yet I had no time to alter. Yours respectfully, W. H. HERNDON.

Issues crowded fast, and with the passage by the Legislature of a Maine law to be submitted to popular vote the State was immediately convulsed by an exciting prohibition campaign. Pulpits thundered, women and children paraded, orators emitted blazing rhetoric — Abolitionists linking liquor with slavery as kindred crimes, and "personal liberty" advocates identifying Prohibition hysteria with Abolition fanaticism — while politicians ran to cover. Lincoln — neither Prohibitionist nor Abolitionist — held aloof, not wishing to divert attention from the supreme question of the age; but Herndon plunged into the thick of the fight, writing and speaking with all the more zeal because liquor was his personal enemy — though it must be said that during his term as mayor he had been singularly abstemious. As he had predicted to Parker, the northern counties voted for the law and Egypt against it. No offices were at stake and there was not a full vote, but the Germans turned out to a man, and, it was charged, also to a woman, and killed Prohibition in Illinois for nearly a generation.[1] In the midst of the campaign Herndon wrote to Parker, sending him a Prohibition speech which has not been preserved:

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, edited by T. J. McCormack, Vol. I, pp. 620-623 (1909).

Springfield, Ill., April 12, 1855.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—Some few days since I sent you a small pamphlet on Temperance. I herewith send you a little speech of mine. Put them by for the present and read at your leisure. I know your trial takes up your time. To expect otherwise would be foolish. Our *State Register* — slaveite, whiskey paper — attacked our prohibitory law and I was called on to defend. . . . The people around me would make me publish in pamphlet form. The editors published on their own accord. I never saw the proofs after original writing. Blunders you will excuse. I pray for your complete acquittal and justification, triumph, etc., in your trial. Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

Parker had spent much time in the preparation of his defense in the expectation of a serious affair, but there was no trial. His counsel moved that the indictment be quashed, and after a brief argument Judge Curtis pronounced that it be so, as defective. Not to be outdone, Parker elaborated and published his "Defense," and while it lost much of its popular effect by losing all its practical utility, it was a memorable plea for liberty and justice.[1] It was, in fact, a history of slavery aggression in America, worked out with a fullness of historical and legal knowledge only surpassed by its genius for invective. No doubt the court foresaw this storm-cloud of eloquence and wished to avert it; for in its published form Parker's denunciation reached its height in handling the Curtis family for its connection with the subserviency of Boston to the Slave Power. Herndon, in writing to congratulate Parker, so interpreted the intention of the court:

Springfield, Ill., April 23, 1855.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—Let me congratulate you upon your escape from the inquisition of slavery. Every man is happy at the result — breathes a little easier. Let me say to you that it was not Curtis who quashed the indictment, but the King South. The South are not fools. They see which way the wind blows, and have done this out of fear. Fear and interest are some men's patriotism, chivalry — all.

[1] *The Trial of Theodore Parker, with the Defense* (1855).

I sent you some time since a small pamphlet on temperance — a small speech — a small leader in one of our dailies, and herewith I send another. I will trouble you no more. I did these things to let you know that so far as I could do good, I was doing it.

This grand outrage on Kansas will ring in the ears of this dead nation yet. I think the North is yet to wake and breathe. Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

P. S.. Mr. Parker, if you see any expressions in those pieces which are yours in essence, remember, you impressed the hard steel upon a softer plate.

IV

Kansas was in the throes of civil strife, and the shock was being felt throughout the country, foreboding, as many feared, "the knell of the Union." Armed bands of ruffians were crossing the border from Missouri for the purpose of seizing the election machinery and through it forcing Kansas into slavery by fraud and violence, while immigrants from the North, sent forward by colonization societies, began to pour in with the design of making it a Free State. Some of the Missourians settled upon fertile and valuable lands, and others roved over the prairies, burning, shooting, and pillaging with impunity. The forces sent by President Pierce to restore order only served to augment the strife, since they were avowedly active in behalf of slavery. Kansas was unsuited for slave-labor, as Webster had pointed out, and the struggle was for this reason futile, but partisan rancor egged on the conflict. The South was excited and aggressive, and the sentiment of the North was gathering to enter its protest at the ballot-box against what Sumner called "the crime against Kansas."

In his Peoria speech Lincoln had given a striking description of the colliding elements, and then added a deep-toned prophetic forecast of blood and violence. With what keen eye he was watching the struggle, measuring its forces and forecasting its results, may be seen in his letter to his friend Joshua Speed, of Kentucky — one of the most significant of all his

letters despite its tone of almost cynical hardness. Speed had said that sooner than yield his right to own slaves, especially at the bidding of those who were not themselves interested, he would see the Union dissolved, but he was equally positive that the men who had precipitated violence and fraud in Kansas ought to be hung. Lincoln replied — and he always wrote more confidentially to Speed than to any other man — that he did not question the legal right of his friend to own slaves, though both admitted the abstract wrong of it, and added:

> It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union. . . . You say, if you were President, you would send an army and hang the leaders of the Missouri outrages upon the Kansas elections; still, if Kansas fairly votes herself a Slave State she must be admitted, or the Union must be dissolved. But how if she votes herself a Slave State unfairly, that is, by the very means for which you say you would hang men? Must she still be admitted, or the Union dissolved? *That will be the phase of the question when it first becomes a practical one.* In your assumption that there may be a fair decision of the slavery question in Kansas, I plainly see that you and I would differ about the Nebraska law. I look upon that enactment not as a law, but as a violence from the beginning. It was conceived in violence, and is being executed by violence. . . . You say men ought to be hung for the way they are executing the law; I say . . . it is being executed in the precise way which was intended from the first, else why does no Nebraska man express astonishment or condemnation? . . . If, like Haman, they should hang upon the gallows of their own building, I shall not be among the mourners for their fate.

As we have seen, the Republican party had been organized, in its first stages at least, in 1854, but Lincoln was not yet a member of it. Nor did he become a member of it until Herndon actually forced him into it in 1856. They err who say that he was a leader in the movement directly, since he was always discouraging anything that savored of haste. Indeed, when he wrote to Speed under date of August, 1855, he confessed him-

self to be a man without a party, though still clinging bravely to the wreck of the old Whig ship. The letter is valuable in that it reveals not only his own hesitancy, but his clear vision of the situation in the South:

> You say that if Kansas fairly votes herself a Free State as a Christian you will rejoice at it. All decent slave-holders talk that way, and I do not doubt their candor. But they never vote that way. Although in private letter and conversation you will express your preference that Kansas shall be free, you would vote for no man for Congress who would say the same thing publicly. No such man could be elected from any district in a Slave State. . . . The slave-breeders and slave-traders are a small, odious and detested class among you; and yet in politics they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters as you are the master of your own negroes.
>
> You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point. I think I am a Whig; but others say there are no Whigs, and that I am an Abolitionist. When I was at Washington, I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty-two times; and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery. I am not a Know-Nothing; that is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes." When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty — to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.

None the less, scouts were manœuvering in advance, and Lincoln surveyed their operations with solicitude, albeit from the rear, not wishing to run too far ahead of the slow, apathetic masses without whom no real advance could be made. Of what those daring and indefatigable scouts were doing Herndon kept Parker informed, occasionally dipping his pen in fire

the better to blister Douglas. With characteristic vividness and enthusiasm he wrote:

Springfield, Ill., Oct. 30, 1855.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—It has been some time since I wrote to you; and you can well afford to be "pestered" once in a long while. This is especially so from your western friend.

First: We in Illinois are now just commencing a systematic organization of Republicanism, and hope to see it inaugurated into a vital, eternal, political power in the State, which shall cover us as nature wraps up her modest flower or gigantic mountain. In this part or central portion of the State we are backward, timid and cowardly The reason is this: Most of us are from the South and I among them, yet so far as the slavery question is concerned we are most emphatically opposed to it, its aggressions, or its spread. Another cause is, that our able politicians are waiting to see the reverse side and the obverse picture, and because they flinch or draw back the people are not disposed to move, but it strikes me there was or is no better time than last year or this; because I intuitively feel, if not see, that the people are ready and anxious to leap into an organization that has justice and equity wrought into vital activity. This is the scrupulous, timid fault of wary politicians who are seeking equilibrium, they know not where, and the people who are accustomed to be led and not to lead, do not want to go forward; and so between the cowardice of some and the want of confidence in others, this political rest or static power in the mass follows. I hope to see them dynamical, vital, active, soon.

Mr. Douglas was here a few weeks since and addressed us in one of his speeches, known for power of a peculiar nature; namely, energy, duplicity and dexterity, driven by an abandon fired by rum — in short, a low, base, hellish effort at renaissance. It may be seen in his face, that conscious ruin has seized him and like Milton's hero in *Paradise Lost* he will do all he can to regain his blissful seat. You can picture the sight. You may think I hate the man. I can say I do not; yet I do loathe him, and I cannot help it. If I love man, his progress; if I look upward and outward, and hope for man, let me ask you the question: How can I do otherwise? Has he not tried to sell me and man, in the individual and species, to this same Slave Power which I hate and yet fear; and if this is so, how can I help my feelings?

Mr. Douglas is generally followed by Lyman Trumbull, his equal in many particulars, but not in the low specialties. Mr. Lincoln sometimes follows. Illinois is the battle ground for the Slave Power and for the Republicans too. Here is to be the fight. Mr. Giddings was here soon after Mr. Douglas, and spoke in the Metropolitan Hall, yet he did not speak with eloquence and power. He spoke very calmly and truthfully, but for the crowd it was not what it ought to be. I suppose he was cramped, not knowing how to feel out for the sentiment of the mass. I may be mistaken, but I do candidly believe the speakers miss the mark by shooting too low, under the cross in the target, and therefore do not win. Excuse the Western figure. There is a great ground-swell, an under-current, a wave from the infinite, the older politicians do not feel it seems to me.

We had Henry Ward Beecher here a few nights since: he is a man. He spoke upon the progressive and conservative man or age, and if I know what eloquence, not of the highest and grandest order, is, he certainly had it. He was intense in his passages of sympathy and energetic in his reprobation of conservative cowardice; and as a general rule his views were correct, just and lofty, yet it seemed to me he hung fire — did not say all he felt. Is he not of your faith and is he not too cowardly to come out — speak out like a brave man? It seems to me so. He will do good. He looks a man and I suppose his Heaven-warrant does not deceive. The crowd was wrapped up in H. Ward Beecher. He is hopeful, somewhat ideal.

As I wrote you once before, we got badly beaten in our temperance move, and the reason is that human rights float in the bubbles of whiskey which swim upon the fire surface. Though defeated we are not conquered. It is very hard to overcome interest, appetite, habit, and the low demagogue who rules the *synod* in the grocery.

I am glad to see Sumner publishing the third volume of speeches. They are eloquent, chaste, classic. I admire Mr. Sumner very much: he is a man all over, inward and outward, from head to foot. I speak of him at a distance, for I am not personally acquainted with him. I see that Emerson is publishing his English notes. They will be a rich treat to us young men; they will be eloquent and grand, poetic, ideal.

I sometime since got your two recent volumes of speeches, etc., and the one at Abingdon is a prophecy fulfilled. The *Tribune* is exactly where it was placed. Kane in that or an-

other is placed where it was predicted. Slavery by judicial legerdemain is sought to be made national. Will it triumph? The spirit within says no. Has not slavery gone too far — done too much — been too imperious? I think it has. Let it die and rot in the tropic heats!

We had Mr. Millburn, the blind preacher, here last night and will have him again tonight: his subjects, "Young America," and "The Rifle, Axe and Saddle Bags." He speaks handsomely, beautifully. Can you not come and see Illinois some time this winter and give us a lecture or so? Friend Greeley did well here. Beecher did well. Can you not come out? Yours, W. H. HERNDON.

Like so many men of his ardent and idealistic type, Herndon seems to have believed in the nobility of the human race as a whole and in the total depravity of many of its individual members. But, as one of his friends said, he was "violently all right." He lacked that judicial sense which discriminates between varying shades of good and ill, so that all things appeared either white or black. That was not so bad as the moral blindness which confounds white and black; yet it involved some measure of injustice, and generally rubbed the fur the wrong way. But he had nerves in his intellect, red blood in his moral passion, and fire in his soul; and in these respects he resembled Parker, who replied one month later:

Boston, Mass., Nov. 30, 1855.

Mr. Herndon.

Dear Sir:—Your kind note of 30th ult. came to Boston when I was in the West and so I have had no moment to answer it until this and now only a brief minute.

I intend next autumn, say October or November, to visit the farther part of the Western States, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, etc. I should like to speak at Springfield. I wish we had a dozen men like Beecher. What a noble fellow he is — a live minister. A minister who believes in making men manly and thinks religion is noble life! I take it the North will have two candidates in the next Presidential election, one Republican, one Know-Nothing; the latter will get the most votes but will be defeated. But good will be done — the "American Party" is bringing out men in the South who have been disfranchised hitherto. They are

the "poor white:" they have no newspapers, no organization, no self-respect. The Know-Nothings enable them to meet and act together. By and by this Southern element will help us. I expect another violent slavery President with a strong opposition in the House and before long in the Senate. Mexico will fall into our hands even, I think, before 1860. Then in 1860 comes the real struggle between the North and South. Freedom and Slavery! I think not before.

I have just got my defense out. It makes an 8vo volume of 250 pages. Yours hastily but truly,

THEO. PARKER.

By the time he replied Herndon had read the "Defense," which he pronounced a masterpiece, as he did nearly everything that Parker wrote. As usual his letter throbs with his hatred of slavery, but is touched with love for the people of the South, his kinsmen, many of whom he knew to be Abolitionists at heart, or at least opposed to slavery. He thinks it probable that the South will absorb Mexico after the Union is dissolved, not before. Both men are full of prophecies of distant calamity, while Lincoln and men of his type were looking at the nearer scene, content to take one step at a time. But many of their predictions were tragically fulfilled:

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 16, 1856.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor some time since, and would have answered but was busy in our Supreme Court attending to business. I hardly think with you in respect to the action of the North. My opinion is, that the North will now endure no more of Southern insolence and wrong; and further, I think I know the Southern blood, and from that knowledge I *know* they will, when the fighting point comes, cringe and crawl away. They can bluster and swagger; but there is an unboastful, serene calmness in Northern bravery which paralyzes their heated and inflated courage. I have been a boy, and have often quailed before this spirit. This is universal to all men, and the South are no exceptions to the universals of humanity. I am proud of my adopted section, for her philosophical, mathematic courage, that knows no cold, no heat, but eternal justice. The North, thank the stars, is erect, that is, men of the North, showing

they have not forgotten principles, the only thing that is permanent or beautiful; all else rots in time.

I think the action and courage exhibited in the election of Banks show which way we may now look for the true moral courage. I think the charm is shivered "like thin glass." The prestige of the South is gone, and I pray God never to return. Her institutions are wrong — ridiculously unjust, Heaven-defying; and if the recent lesson can teach her only justice to the North, and the rights of man, I will be more than pleased. Another illustration is the men of Lawrence; their coolness, bravery, and a sense of justice, awed a drunken rabble incited by a drunken politician. *The North are up.*

I hate slavery: one word long years ago did it. My father was asked in my presence why he left Virginia, and then Kentucky. He answered: That "my labor should never be degraded by competition with slave-labor." I must, however, confess that it, the hate, grows — develops as principles are understood, as duty and obligation to humanity are opened to me; as my soul expands to its responsibilities. I once said to you that I did not go so far as some did. I move, not backward. Is there any safe, great everlasting position this side of principle? Where is that point? Shall it stop with class? Shall it like truth sheet the universe of man? These are questions which stare a man in the face.

I love the South, and cannot help it; there is something open, manly, chivalrous to draw me. But I hope I can draw a line between an institution and men. From my own knowledge there are a great number of men in the South that silently pray for Northern success — dare not say it aloud. Not only the poor whites, but many others who are rich but do not and will not own slaves, are with us in feeling. *I know this.* I have heard them curse us Northern men most heartily when we would "cave in," as they called it. Let me say here, that in so saying, they would look around the room to see if any spies were looking or if any hired negro heard it. Slavery is the most terrible thing in the world. I say that I love the South, and will never injure her. I love her men and cannot help it. I draw a line between her citizens and her institutions.

When I wrote you to come out here and lecture I did not know you were in Chicago, but learned so a few days after I wrote. I was really sorry when I received the news of your prior engagement. I hope you will come out in Octo-

ber or November, 1856, and talk to us. We, the citizens, intend to try to engage some of the best men to lecture here this next fall and winter. The feat was tried on an orthodox scale. You may know how it ended.

Do you think that Mexico will fall into our hands about 1860? I think not. My reasons in short are — the Northern courage showed this winter throughout the Free States has rather taken the Southern men back, and they will not move in the matter till we forget our triumphs in our lethargy. The policy of the South will be for years fawning, flattering, corrupting, till her day comes again, and then "she will do her best." If this policy isn't pursued the Union will be dissolved, and a Southern Confederacy will be formed. Then the South may absorb Mexico, not this Union, so soon as 1860. However, our present energy and intensity may fuse away before 1860, and then you may be correct. I paid attention to what you said.

Henry Ward Beecher is decidedly a new man, a new species of man. He is strong, vigorous, original, brave. He will do the world good yet. He is a new rose, fresh from the garden of the almighty forces. This age was fortunate in having so beautiful a present. He is a man — "a fresh minister."

I received your "Defense" and have carefully read it; it is good; it is didactic, but powerful; it will live. It may say way down the ages, "I still live," when it is yet fresh — not on a death-bed. Hope to see your work soon on "Religious Development,"— hope to see Emerson's "English Traits" soon — comes slowly. W. H. HERNDON.

At heart, both Parker and Herndon were of womanly gentleness. Their hatred of hurtful errors and practical wrongs was kept at white heat by a genuine love of mankind, and for all their arraignments and castigations they had no malice or bitterness of spirit. They did not look on oppression, fraud, and misery as abstractions, to be contemplated with philosophic calmness. They saw living men, women, and children exposed, suffering, and degraded, and their hearts quivered within them.

CHAPTER IV

Herndon and Parker

I

When great questions come in little questions are crowded out, but they are sometimes unnecessarily slow in making their exit. As the Slave Power became more daring and insolent, opposition to it grew steadily stronger every day, and the various orders of anti-slavery advocates were drawn ever closer together. Old party ties were still clinging; but the liberal spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of principle became daily more manifest, while the men of all parties — Whigs, Abolitionists, Liberty men, and even Democrats — showed themselves willing to surrender their old parties for one which should take the right kind of stand against the spread of slavery. Not otherwise could they hope for success in Illinois or for any great influence in the nation.

At length the time seemed ripe for such a movement, and the preliminary step was taken at a gathering of Anti-Nebraska editors, held at Decatur in February, 1856. Eleven delegates were present,[1] among whom were Charles H. Ray of the Chicago *Tribune*, Paul Selby of the Jacksonville *Journal*, W. J. Usrey of the Decatur *Chronicle*, and George Snyder of the Chicago *Staats-Zeitung*; and they proceeded at once to the discussion of the principles upon which such an organization should be built. All agreed that the Slave States should be sustained in all the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution, and in disclaiming any desire to interfere with slavery where it existed. With such admissions, they

[1] For a complete list of the editors who took part in this conference, see Moses's *Illinois, Historical and Statistical*, Vol. II, p. 598 (1889-1892).

passed resolutions " in favor of the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, or in other words, that we will strive by all legal means to restore to Kansas and Nebraska a legal guarantee against slavery, of which they were deprived at the cost of the violation of the plighted faith of the nation; that we hold the settlement of the true relations of the general and State governments to slavery, and the restriction of slavery to its present authorized limits, as the paramount questions for consideration." They advocated, in addition, certain reforms in the administration of State affairs.

Upon such a basis the new party was to stand, and to perfect its organization a State convention was recommended, which should meet at Bloomington on May 29th, following. A State Central Committee of eleven was appointed to supervise the interests of the party, W. H. Herndon to represent the Springfield district, with two for the State at large, Ira O. Wilkinson and Gustave Koerner, then Lieutenant Governor. But Governor Koerner declined to serve, and in an open letter in the Belleville *Advocate* set forth his reasons, while declaring himself to be in harmony with the sentiment of the meeting regarding slavery and expressing the utmost abhorrence for the idea " that the Constitution of the freest country on earth carries slavery wherever its flag is unfurled." But, he continued:

> A mere opposition-party may please those who have set their eyes upon political preferment; it does not satisfy me. Such a party loses its power the moment it attains it. It may share in the emoluments of office, but can do no good. A new party should meet all the important political issues clearly and distinctly, without mental reservation. I could not co-operate with any party, which, while asserting the principle that all soil heretofore free should remain free as long as it is a Territory, would not, at the same time affirmatively maintain that the Constitutional rights of the Southern States should never be interfered with; that all American citizens without distinction of birth and religion should be entitled " to rule America; " that the present naturalization laws should not be modified in an illiberal spirit; that monopolies in every shape and form should be abolished; and that no wasteful ex-

penditure, under whatever specious plea, should be encouraged, either under the National or State government.[1]

This letter, coming from one who spoke for an influential German element in the State, was widely quoted in the press, and found response. Governor Koerner was a Democrat, whose party had honored him in many ways, and a close friend of Douglas; but he opposed the Nebraska Bill on the ground that it "was a repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and a sectional measure devoted to the interests of slavery." Although he saw no Constitutional way of dealing with slavery, he hated it, and could not bring himself to favor its extension into Territory heretofore free. Like many other Democrats, he hoped that the State and National conventions of his party would adopt platforms such as Anti-Nebraska men could consistently stand upon. It was a vain hope; for the State convention, held at Springfield, on May 1st, after nominating W. A. Richardson for Governor, passed strong Nebraska resolutions, and closed by commending Senator Douglas for the "manly, daring, and undeviating fidelity with which he has always maintained State sovereignty and National honor." As a result, such men as Wentworth, Judd, Palmer, Baker, Allen, and Koerner left the party. Meanwhile, letters were passing to and fro between Herndon and Parker, and we have this glimpse of the busy life of a great preacher, whose magnificent and ceaseless evangel brought him to an early grave:

Boston, Mass., April 17, 1856.

Mr. Herndon.

My Dear Sir:—Your letters — the printed matter not less than the written — rejoiced me very much. I honor the noble spirit which breathes in them all. I didn't answer before for I had no time, and a hundred letters now lie before me not replied to. When I tell you that I have lectured 84 times since Nov. 1, and preached at home every Sunday but 2 when I was in Ohio, and never an old sermon, and have had six meetings a month at my own house, and have written more than 2000 letters, besides a variety of other work belonging to a minister and scholar,

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 3-5 (1909).

you may judge that I must economize minutes and often neglect a much valued friend. So please excuse my delay in acknowledging your brave manly words, and believe me, Faithfully yours,

THEO. PARKER.

Praise from such a source was praise indeed to Herndon; and he hastened to reply, sending a clipping from the *State Register* and the *Journal* in which he was highly spoken of as a man, in view of the mention of his name as a possible candidate for Governor. He refused, however, to let his name be so used, preferring to fight as a private in the ranks, and not wishing to stand in the way of his partner:

Springfield, Ill., April 28, 1856.

Mr. Parker.

Friend: — I received yours a few days since. I had an idea that you were immersed in your pursuits. I had every reason to know this — to know it had been — was so now. I therefore excuse you with pleasure. However, I did not write to you — except collaterally — for compliments. I asked a question in my last two letters. The question was this: What time is the best for a man — "sucker" — to come East and see the world of matter and man? In your hurry you overlooked the substance and took up the incident. This I forgive. You are a pretty good judge of what, as a general rule, the young want: in my case a little mistaken — not much.

Let us be candid. Your compliment did me no harm, but *great good.* I do love the approbation of good men — none others are sought for approbation. I hope to live to see the day when I can make slavery feel my influence. That shall be *the one* object of my life. It and myself are enemies. I am feeble: it is strong, yet I am right and it is wrong: nature — eternal truth — is with me: error is with it. Thus we stand. I am, I hope, half brave; it is a coward. The end is seen. Do not understand me to say that I will live to see slavery abolished and that *I will do it.* I hope with others, to sow the elements whose immanent inherent power will do it after, probably long after, my death.

I told you long since that the great fault of politicians was in not following the people, or in not speaking for principle — that the people were correct — their ground intuitions were almost always correct; and I will here detail a case. I, about two or three weeks since, made a speech in

Atlanta, Logan County — spoke for two hours and a quarter to a large crowded house — say 700 or 800 — filled with men, women — God bless the women — and young men and pretty girls; and if I ever did a subject justice, in my poor way, I did it then and there. I took open, broad, deep antagonistic ground against slavery everywhere on God's habitable globe. I really expected to be hissed, but my words were warm, intense, hot from an impassioned nature. The crowd saw it — saw my nervous excitement — my thrill, listened to me and really respected me more, ten thousand times more, than a milk and cider affair. I never saw a more exultant crowd in my life. Well, I shall say no more for fear you do not know me. Now what was the result of all this. In a few days after landing at home I found a complimentary, most encouraging letter, asking my name for its use as a candidate for Governor. I herewith send you a small slip of paper. The first article is from our *State Register*, the paper which is my life-long enemy — politically — have no other that I know of; the second piece is from the *Journal* — the paper I used to write for — been kicked off, as it became Know-Nothing. I have nothing to do with it now, nor for months. There you can see what you see. I do not want office, even could I get it; but the illustration I want to make is, that *politicians* want boldness — want manliness — want principle. When I say the letter followed me, I mean to say it was published a few days after my return. I never saw the letter till published — will never consent to be a candidate for anything.

If professional men, all men, would only be brave, awake the spontaneous slumberings of human power — the inward divinity — and follow it, rouse and educate the grandest intuitions of the human soul, then would all tyrants perish, and nothing stand between man and his God, but the limitations immanent in the human. I hope to see things progress along that path, and the day may come, if this *new democracy* get the helm of affairs, when that will be the object for which legislators and others will bend all their forces. Excuse me. I am on the eve of going off on business — to talk for man. Need not answer. Get others to do so. Your friend,

W. H. Herndon.

Some time before the Bloomington meeting Mr. Herndon drew up and circulated a paper, calling a county convention

in Springfield to select delegates to the Republican State convention. Lincoln was away at the time and, believing that he knew his partner, Herndon took the liberty of signing his name to the call, which he published, with the signatures attached, in the *Sangamon Journal*. No sooner had it appeared than John T. Stuart — who, with other Springfield friends, was trying to save Lincoln from the radicals — rushed into the office in great excitement, and asked "if Lincoln had signed that Abolitionist call in the *Journal*?" Herndon calmly told him what he had done, and the indignant Stuart exclaimed, "Then you have ruined him!" In relating the incident Mr. Herndon adds:

> But I was by no means alarmed at what others deemed inconsiderate and hasty action. I thought I understood Lincoln thoroughly, but in order to vindicate myself if assailed I immediately sat down, after Stuart had rushed out of the office, and wrote Lincoln, who was then in Tazewell County attending court, a brief account of what I had done and how much stir it was creating in the ranks of his conservative friends. If he approved or disapproved my course I asked him to write or telegraph me at once. In a brief time came his answer: "*All right; go ahead. Will meet you — radicals and all.*" Stuart subsided, and the conservative spirits who hovered around Springfield no longer held control of the political fortunes of Abraham Lincoln.[1]

II

On May 29th the Republicans of Illinois — or "Anti-Nebraska men," as they yet called themselves — met in convention at Bloomington, with John M. Palmer in the chair. It was a notable gathering, and the unanimity of its action was all the more astonishing when we recall the spirit of the hour and the motley political complexion of its delegate body. Democrats like Wentworth, Judd, Allen, and Koerner, angered by the attitude of their party, were ready for extreme measures; several counties having already revolted from the Democracy as soon as the Springfield platform had been made

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 52.

known: for example Peoria, Madison, and especially Cook, where the feeling was intense. Of course the Abolitionists were there in full force, led by Lovejoy, Codding, Eastman, and Herndon, and such Whigs as Jesse K. Dubois were for going home at once when they saw their activity. That wiser counsels prevailed was due to Archibald Williams and Judge Dickey, but most of all to Lincoln, who actually dominated the convention, dictated its platform, and directed its angry radicalism into a moderate and conservative course.

Such a feat was all the more remarkable when we recall the feverish and excited mood of the hour, fanned into a blaze by recent events. Civil war was raging in Kansas, where the city of Lawrence had just been attacked, and the " Free State " hotel and two printing offices destroyed. Governor Robinson of Kansas had been arrested without legal warrant in Missouri, his house sacked and burned, and himself chained out on the prairie, in default of a jail; his wife, and James S. Emery, a leading Free State man, were in Bloomington. Governor Reeder, who had just escaped from Kansas in disguise, was also there, making speeches on the street, and stirring the delegates to fever heat. Just one week before Charles Sumner had been assaulted in the Senate Chamber by " Bully " Brooks, and was reported to be dying; while Senator Trumbull had offered a resolution in the Senate, designed to restore peace in Kansas, only to meet derision. Street talk vied with convention oratory in expressions of radicalism, so much so that while O. H. Browning was making a speech the crowd kept calling for Lovejoy — who, like Otis of colonial fame, was a flame of fire — and Browning was obliged to yield the floor. Herndon put forth all his power to restrain the radicals, many of whom were still suspicious of Lincoln, promising them that his partner would be heard at the right time. Lincoln himself, who did not ordinarily betray anxiety, was in a state of suppressed excitement throughout the session, but he kept his mental balance, and never were his powers of political shrewdness and strategy put to better account.

Amid great enthusiasm William H. Bissell, who had led an Illinois regiment at the battle of Buena Vista, was nominated

for Governor, and Francis Hoffman for Lieutenant Governor, both choices being unanimous. The remainder of the State ticket was made up by a nominating committee, of which Lincoln was chairman, and the report was adopted without alteration. A State Central Committee was appointed to direct the campaign. The resolutions passed were much the same as those suggested by the editorial convention at Decatur, conceived purposely in a broad and liberal spirit so as to secure the support of all classes of anti-slavery men. Only one thing of importance was added, namely, that the admission of Kansas on the Constitution adopted by the people should take place immediately. After a hearty endorsement of the recent work of Trumbull in the Senate, further action was taken urging the formation of Anti-Nebraska clubs all over the State. No sooner had the business been disposed of than a chorus of voices began to call for "Lincoln! Lincoln!" and there followed a speech, vivid in its passionate intensity, which his friends said "put him on the track for the Presidency." Of that speech Mr. Herndon said in a lecture, twelve years later:

> I have heard or read all of Mr. Lincoln's great speeches, and I give it as my opinion that the Bloomington speech was the grand effort of his life. Heretofore he had simply argued the slavery question on grounds of policy — the statesman's grounds. . . . Now he was newly baptized; . . . the smothered flame broke out; his eyes glowed with inspiration; he felt justice; his heart was alive, . . . and he stood before the throne of the eternal Right. . . . It was logic; it was pathos; it was enthusiasm; it was justice, equity, truth and right set ablaze by the divine fires of a soul maddened by the wrong; it was hard, heavy, knotted, gnarled, backed with wrath. I attempted for about fifteen minutes as was usual with me then to take notes, but at the end of that time I threw pen and paper away and lived only in the inspiration of the hour. If Mr. Lincoln was six feet and four inches high usually, at Bloomington that day he was seven feet, and inspired at that.

For all of his calm sagacity, Lincoln was in fact a man of intense and fiery nature, and his friends, especially Herndon, had often noted in him a gleam as of a sleeping lightning which he dared not use. At last, in a moment of high

tension, his impenetrable reserve was broken, the pent-up brooding thought of years rushed into flaming speech, and his words swayed and quivered as if charged with electricity. No report of that outburst remains,[1] only memories and impressions which men try in vain to record; but it is not too much to say that it fused the mass of conflicting elements into a fraternal union, and welded them into a powerful party. "Never was an audience more completely electrified by human eloquence," wrote John L. Scripps in the Chicago *Press*. "Again and again during its delivery they sprang to their feet and upon the benches and testified by long-continued shouts and the waving of hats how deeply the speaker had wrought upon their minds and hearts." The burden of his utterance was, "Kansas shall be free!" and he closed with a sentence, almost tragic in its earnestness: "We will say to the Southern dis-unionists, *we won't go out of the Union, and you sha'n't*!" No one, not even the Abolitionists, any longer had any doubt as to where Lincoln stood, and all hastened to rally about him as the leader of the new party in Illinois.

When Herndon went back to Springfield he called a "mass" meeting to ratify the action of the Bloomington Convention, but such was the temper of the town that only

[1] In 1896 W. C. Whitney published in *McClure's Magazine* what purported to be a report of "Lincoln's Lost Speech," as it is called, which he claimed to have reproduced from notes taken at the time of its delivery — forty years before. Of course, after so long a time it was impossible to reproduce the speech, however vivid its impression, from longhand notes, and many of the friends of Lincoln who heard the speech were annoyed, if not indignant. Among these were J. M. Scott, John M. Palmer, T. J. Henderson, I. L. Morrison, George Schneider, B. F. Shaw, J. M. Ruggles, O. T. Reeves, and others, all of whom repudiated the Whitney version, which professed to give even the interruptions and punctuations of "Applause." We need not charge Mr. Whitney with forgery, as some have done, but Mr. I. N. Phillips has shown, from internal and external evidence, the absurdity of calling that reproduction a "report." The Whitney "report" bears almost none of the marks of Lincoln's peculiar and characteristic style, and should never have been put forth as anything more than an impression or a memory. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by I. N. Phillips, Appendix (1901).

one man besides himself and Lincoln was present. Lincoln spoke, nevertheless — in response to "deafening calls," as Herndon said — dryly remarking that the meeting was larger than he had thought it would be, for, while he had been sure that he and Herndon would attend, he had not been sure that any one else would. And then he concluded: "While all seems dead, the age itself is not. It liveth as surely as our Maker liveth. Under all this seeming want of life and motion, the world does move, nevertheless. Be hopeful, and now let us adjourn and appeal to the people." Still, Lincoln was not without honor save in his own city; for, three weeks later, in the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia, which nominated John C. Fremont for the Presidency, he received 110 votes for Vice-President. When the news reached him he said that "It must have been the great Lincoln of Massachusetts" they were voting for,[1] but so spontaneous a tribute, although it did not bring him the nomination, showed that he was not an unknown man. So did the letters which poured into his office, asking him to speak not only in his own State, but in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

Both partners were in request as speakers, Lincoln making more than fifty speeches during the campaign, confining himself to his own State. He bent his energies to the task of reducing the strength of the Know-Nothings — who had organized as a secret order, with signs, pass-words, and high-sounding titles, and nominated Millard Fillmore — and so effective was his work that had it been possible to carry the process a little farther, he would have saved Illinois. Notable also was his influence with the Germans, who had really nominated Fremont,[2] and whom he was eager to win to the new party;

[1] *Lincoln's Vote* for *Vice-President*, by Jesse W. Weik, *Century Magazine*, June, 1908. This fact should be kept in mind by those who write as though Lincoln was an obscure, unknown man before his debate with Douglas, not less than by those who seem to think that his nomination for President in 1860 was a happy accident in politics. Surely Dr. Von Holst has destroyed these two errors. — *Constitutional History*, Vols. VII, VIII (1892). It does not add to the greatness of Lincoln to make his career appear magical; it detracts from it.

[2] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 16, 33 (1909).

nor did they admire him less when he exclaimed, "God bless the Dutch!" knowing him to be sincere. In a significant speech at Galena, while refuting the charge that the Republicans were working for a disruption of the Union, he let fall a few remarks about the binding force of the decisions of the Supreme Court, to which he pinned his faith. It so happened that the Dred Scott case was then pending before that tribunal,[1] and if Lincoln had forgotten his words Douglas was ready to refresh his memory one year later. It was an exciting contest which, despite the defeat of Fremont, brought victory to the new party in Illinois, and added laurels to Lincoln as its leader.

During the campaign Theodore Parker visited Springfield and lectured, and it was characteristic of the town to give him a small hearing. Lincoln was away, but Herndon ran in from a speaking tour, dusty and tired, only to be chagrined at the small audience, and to be yet further humiliated by some misunderstanding as to the price of the lecture, which had been arranged by Herbert Post. Moreover the lecture had not been properly advertised, but advertising would have done little good in Springfield where Parker was held to be a dangerous man both politically and theologically. Against such an environment Herndon had to struggle, and it weighed upon him at times like the millions of tons of water on a diver in the sea

[1] This famous case, from whose final decision the nation appealed to the God of Battle, was begun in 1847. Dred Scott was a negro slave of Dr. Emerson, a surgeon in the United States Army, then stationed in Missouri. Dr. Emerson took Scott with him when, in 1843, he moved to Illinois, and subsequently to Fort Snelling, Wisconsin. That was free territory under the Missouri Compromise, which, if valid, made Scott free. When Dr. Emerson returned to Missouri he brought Scott, his wife and child, with him, and the case came to the attention of Roswell Field — father of Eugene Field, the poet — who began proceedings in St. Louis. He was defeated, but renewed the fight in 1854, and from an adverse decision of the lower court appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. His connection with the case ceased with the preparation of the appeal, which he sent to Montgomery Blair, with whom was associated for Scott George E. Curtis. — *Eugene Field*, by Slason Thompson, Vol. I, Chap. III (1901).

who is climbing to the surface, which he despairs of reaching with brain and body intact. Hence a letter of abject regret:

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 12, 1856.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — Enclosed is a letter from Mr. Post. He made the arrangements with Mr. Wells in reference to your lecture. You will see what he says; and then you can throw the blame where it justly belongs. Had you spoken to me the night I left you at the tavern and told me how this matter stood, I should have felt much better than I did after you went away. I regret all this proceeding very much; yet I do not know where I am to blame. I hope you will have the goodness to separate me from the "mass." You have been shamefully wronged by some one. By the by, did not H. Ward Beecher have a difficulty with Mr. Wells? What say you? Will you place me right in your estimation, if you can?

When here you told me you intended so soon as you could to give four lectures — one on Washington, one on Jefferson, one on Franklin, and one on Adams. I hope you may do this, and do it as speedily as your good judgment dictates; they are needed. Can they not be prefaced with another — say on "The History of Liberty," running from Greece, Rome, Germany, France, and England down to us?

We are defeated for President in Illinois; but have elected our whole State ticket — a pure Fremont-Republican ticket — for officers in this State. This is glory enough for Illinois; it is a reproof, a burning blasting censure to Douglas and Richardson; they are politically dead; compensation will follow; hell — let this word stand — will get two sweet morsels when they go, if they do go. We Fremont men feel as if victory had perched on our banner. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Such a triumph, won by a fusion of heterogeneous elements, was just cause for pride, as it was the first time in the history of Illinois that the Democrats had failed of a majority in the State elections. How nobly the various elements had worked together — the Abolitionists led by Lovejoy, the Whigs by Lincoln and Yates, the Democrats by Wentworth, Palmer, and Koerner; and each leader realized that the vic-

tory was due to the efforts of each faction and to the unity of all. Had the Know-Nothings joined forces with the new party Buchanan would have been defeated, for they held the balance of power. But Fremont was not the man for President in such a crisis; moreover the Republican party was too young to take control of affairs, and had yet to find its true leader. Parker interpreted the meaning of the election as follows:

Boston, Mass., Nov. 17, 1856.

My dear Mr. Herndon:

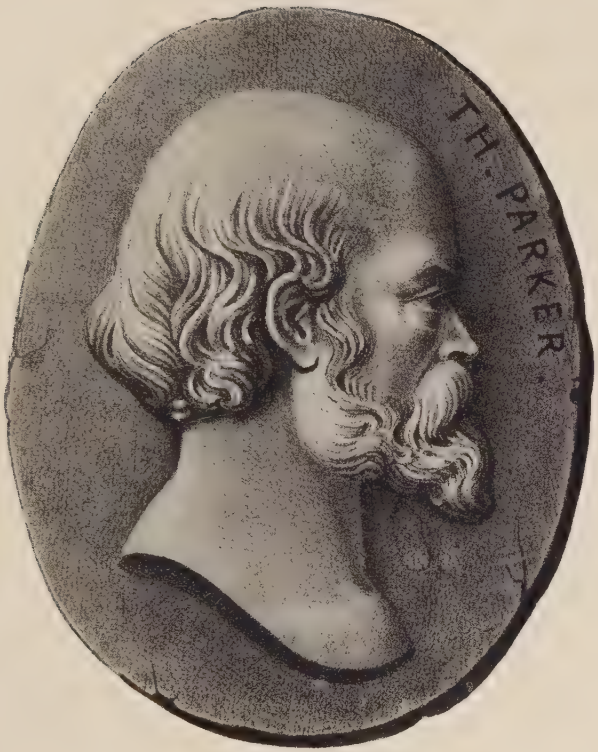
Don't think I had any hard thoughts about the lecture at Springfield. I was more concerned at the smallness of the audience than aught besides. I felt a little delicacy about naming the matter to you and should not have thought any more of it had not you written for an explanation of my looks. There was a misunderstanding between Mr. Beecher and Mr. Wells; but I shall have none with anybody.

While I write the "Democrats" who think the self-evident truth of the Declaration of Independence "is self-evident lie" are firing their cannons in the Common for the victory of Slavery over Freedom. Just eighty years ago today the Tories in New York celebrated the greatest victory which the British gained over the Americans in the Revolution. For November 16, 1776, General Greene surrendered Fort Washington to the British with 2818 men, provisions, cannons, etc. It was the greatest defeat in the whole war! How the Tories rejoiced!

Well, the cause of American democracy was in less terrible peril November 17, 1776, than November 17, 1856; for then our chief foes were abroad, the pestilent council was 3000 miles off; while now our enemy is in the midst of us and we think him a friend, and the vicious council is chosen by the people whom it prepares to ruin.

Election morning there were three alternatives before the people: — 1. Freedom may annihilate the institutions of slavery by peaceful legislation. II. Slavery may annihilate the institutions of freedom by peaceful legislation. III. The hostile parties may draw their swords and fight the matter out.[1]

[1] Parker had always a fancy for prediction, as may be seen in a letter to Dr. Fuster, a Viennese professor, June 17, 1856: "Fremont will be nominated tomorrow. I think he will be elected; then the trouble is



THEODORE PARKER

From a portrait made in Switzerland by Desor soon after the death of Parker, and never before reproduced in America

Election night, by the action of the people the first alternative was withdrawn. Now we are to make our choice between II and III — between the ruin of Democratic institutions and Civil War. Do you doubt which we shall choose? God bless your noble efforts.

Yours faithfully, THEO. PARKER.

This letter, with its ominous forebodings, impressed Herndon deeply, and we shall find him recurring to it, as to a prophetic scroll, the following year. His reply is interesting, as a glimpse of his energy, his enthusiasm, and his methods of work in a cause which possessed him like a passion. His letter is frank, but in no sense boastful or exaggerative:

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 27, 1856.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — I received your letter in answer to mine, directed to you at Boston, and for which I am under many obligations to you. In yours you approve my conduct in reference to the cause of Freedom in Illinois, during the late Presidential race. I tried to do my duty and spoke always from a high and elevated standpoint. If I did not persuade everybody, I at least taught some that there was such a thing as Justice; that there was an Ideal always floating close to man but ever moving towards God. I urged the young men to struggle for that point where the Ideal and Actual are wed.

When I wrote to you some years since you must have thought I was crazy in stating to you that I intended to sow seeds which should never die. Now let me state to you what I did — what I acted, and then you may pronounce " guilty " or " not guilty " of rashness. Firstly: I collected some two or three hundred dollars and sent this to the Republican association and other places; and purchased documents, speeches, books, etc., and scattered them among our people. I did this alone. Secondly: I commenced early in 1854 in our county and spoke on every stump and in every church and schoolhouse therein, and thus carried our county by a larger majority than ever before.

settled peacefully. If he is not elected, then the Union goes to pieces in five years — not without blood. It is strange that men are not yet wise enough to settle difficulties without fighting." — *Recollections of Seventy Years*, by F. B. Sanborn, Vol. II, p. 563 (1909).

Thirdly: I commenced early in March, 1856, and spoke upon an average of twice a week in almost every part of our wide-extended State — spoke to tens and to ten thousand at once. I always spoke feelingly, earnestly, with force, though I do say it myself. Fourthly: I turned my office into a kind of war-office — took the young, active, vigorous, honest men there and talked to them — got them to take an interest that they would not otherwise have done in favor of human liberty — human rights. Fifthly: You know my position here, I suppose, as a lawyer and a man; and if I had any earthly influence, let me assure you that I moved this class as intensely as I could. I did some good even in this department — the Law — of frigid conservatism. Sixthly: When I met a young man of my profession who had high hopes — who was pure — who had an ideal of the perfection of purposes — who was really religious in God's view of actual religion, I gave him a list of books and made him buy them. You know probably what I recommended and whose books.

Mr. Parker, these are facts and not imaginations which were dreamed. These I state to you as facts, by which I am willing to be judged. If these things, with others which I cannot now express, do not amount to sowing seeds that will never die, then the ability simply fell short of the hopes.

In your last letter to me you stated you regretted your lecture here more on account of the absence of the audience than most anything else. This I regretted as much as you did; yet let me state to you that I think it sprung from no ill will to you; but more from a complication of facts. I hoped to have a long chat with you on the evening you were here, and to state to you things as they exist in the West, and which you will scarcely get unvarnished for a long time to come; but an unexpected misunderstanding came over us, and cut me through; thus depriving me of the pleasure. . . . I was at the time worn down, having spoken I think nearly a hundred times — was not well — had neglected my person, my clothes, my home, office, all, all, and suppose I did not cut a very handsome figure before you. Friend, pardon all — forget and forgive — remember only the good; the motives and intentions.

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

Give my best respects to your friend Wendell Phillips and tell him to publish his speeches by all means.

III

With the election of Buchanan — than whom slavery never had a better friend — Lincoln fell into one of those strange lapses which are among the least comprehensible of the mysteries of his life. During the next two years he did little to suggest the brilliant work of 1854 and 1856, or the splendid service he was to render in the near future. His speeches at the banquet in Chicago and at Springfield in June, 1857, show little advance in thought, and none in oratorical manner. In fact, there is in both a marked falling away from the dignity and power of his speeches in 1854. But the lapse, if we may so speak of it, was only temporary, and was due no doubt to his disgust, if not discouragement, at the triumph of wrong. While the campaign was going on business had piled up in the office, but Herndon found time to write to his friend Parker, congratulating him upon the re-election of Charles Sumner. Politically, theologically, and otherwise the Western lawyer and the Boston reformer had much in common, including an ardent love of nature in all her aspects; as witness the following letter, written by a true child of the open air, reporting a tramp in the winter woods:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 24, 1857.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — We have just heard that Hon. Charles Sumner has been re-elected to the United States Senate, by the Legislature of Old Massachusetts. God bless her! Let me congratulate you, and humanity through you, upon this great event in the history of the moves of Liberty. Humanity can be reached only through the individual — I use you. May Sumner live — may you live, he senatorially, and you ministerially — to strike the last link, and shiver it too, from the last slave that breathes the free air of heaven. Your letter to me, some time since, and your letter to the Anti-Slavery Convention, I am reflecting on. Enough of politics now.

I am this moment in my office — bodily so; yet I am in the woods. I got tired of town and books; and so I thought I would take a ramble in the forests with my dog and gun, and see what I could see. The day is very cold

— so cold that the frozen particles of water glitter like millions of small fire globes, blazing in the air. The keen wind whips around the sharp corners of the hills; cold, yet I press on to the place of game and sport. I am now in the deep woods; and stealthily creep along the underbrush, now moving this bush, now that limb, that impedes my way. Man is the lord of all he surveys! He is king! And yet he bows humbly to the outstretched arm of briar and bush. Great lord — he! After traveling thus for two or three miles over dense woods and underbrush, I became somewhat fatigued and sat down on a log, and commenced looking at nature. The trees pop and crack all around me; and the few little birds that are about lie low — keep close to the ground. The forest trees stand out boldly against the infinite blue — look shriveled in their " cold and naked anatomy " — this from you, I think. Before me stands a large black oak, probably a thousand years old, and up and down its trunk runs, skips and hops, a little tom-tit, a small speckled bird, about as big as a canary, now running vertically up and down, now laterally around, peeping into the thick bark — that is, into the crevices — to see if he cannot find the larvæ of bug or insect, or a stray berry which some unfortunate bird has forgotten, or has not yet needed. This little bird is a great rogue. He has two equally long claws before and behind; and so is adapted to go up or down or around; he is a cute little rogue. His voice seems to say *chick-quit, chick-quit*. He found nothing and has flown.

I see some distance from me a tolerably large black-jack hickory bush; it has very large hiberneals for the leaf germ, and I want to see into them. In going to the tree through the bushes and snow I looked a little ahead of me, and in a small bunch of dry grass sits a rabbit, snug and warm. Timid little fellow — free from harm so far as my gun is concerned. The dog is behind me and yet I can see — he has thrown his head up to the wind — that he has caught the scent, and we shall have a chase. Sure enough, the rabbit bounds and the dog yelps hot after him; they range down a small slope and up a little elevation — down another hollow and are out of sight. After a few seconds I hear the dog bark, and when I get there I find that the rabbit has " holed," and the dog is scratching at the roots of the tree. I let it alone and called my dog off, and went along up the creek, forgetting my hibernacle philosophy.

I went to the creek and cut a small hole in the ice — in

a ripple — and stooped to drink; and about this time some little fishes caught the thrill of an air hole and came to it; and there they and I had fun. They would struggle with each other as to their right of air, but as with men the "biggest" and cruelest took the day: here goes a little chub; he has got mad and sulky, and so he goes off and pouts and threats. They all move, not as in summer, quick and flashing, but dull, heavy and not beautiful, as in spring. As many as can hover around the hole, but soon winter will seal the window with bar of spicula and shutter of ice.

I am now on the ice going down the creek to Sangamon River, about five miles from town, where I expect to find game. On my way down, on the ice, I see little tracks of wood-mice, crossing the creek on the snow. The little fellows' legs are too short to reach the ice through the snow, and so they make a track — a path, rather, with their whole body, still leaving a small impression with the feet. Here stands a large snag in the ice, leaning at about an angle of forty-five degrees east, and the snow for some yards has been blown from the ice, leaving a clean path west of the snag — the wind having blown from the east. I can see the diverging paths of the wind, widening every inch from the trunk of the tree, until wholly lost by cross currents and its own failing power. This is a curious study; the laws of the winds, if they have any laws, can here be seen in some of their manifestations. Is there any law in anything, in matter and spirit? Is there any law in material nature? Is not the idea of law an abstraction?

I pick up my gun from the ice and pad along to the field of sport. Down the creek an animal is crossing and I will "put him through," if he is of the eatable species; but if not, it and my dog for it. I walk on and the thing proves to be an old *he* ground-hog — rather a hard customer for a common dog. He is smart: he "holes" or I should have assisted my dog — if necessary. These ground-hogs are a thick, heavy-made animal, weighing about fifteen pounds — long, not active; powerful, tough; broad teeth before, like a beaver, for cutting roots in burrowing; they are long-lived, useless creatures: looking out of man's eyes, when I say this. My dog whines at the hole in the bank, and looks up with his large gray intelligent eyes and asks me to assist him. But I can do him no good — take a day to do it. So we go till we can just see the banks of the Sangamon.

Across the river I expect to find some good wild game, up on the bluffs and amidst the dense woods, probably

some wild turkeys. I am now traveling slowly, attentively — my eyes sweeping over this hill and up and down that hollow. I have now got on some fresh turkey tracks, and I will follow on and go with them. I look at the tracks and the long toes go due north, ranging for some fields; and so I know about where they are. I walk slowly, my eyes sweeping the short space before me, so as to be as quick as the exigencies demand. It is not long before I hear a quick, sharp noise, going *quit, quit*. These are turkeys. The dog has flushed them; they take to flight, some lighting on the large tall trees not far from me. Yonder is one and I will go for it. So I pull off my gloves, lay my rifle up against a tree and take sight, touch the trigger and off it goes. The turkey bounds up, quivers on the wing, and — falls. I pick it up and start home. Its blue, cold neck is long — toes on the ground and its bill coming to the vest.

I am now at the river standing on a high bold knob where I stood twenty years ago; but O, what a change! Instead of wildness and wolves I see farm on farm till they melt on the horizon, and cattle and sheep scattered along the plain. The deep, owl-forest has been cut away, and the wood-man's axe kisses the sun in its whirl. O, what a change — all for the better. Go on and you may see what another has said, a day when the state shall be without a king, society without aristocracy, a church without a priest, and a family without a slave. Yours truly,

W. H. Herndon.

And in other fields Mr. Herndon was also a hunter, particularly in philosophy, whither his speculative tendency led him in quest of game. In his library, which was unusually large for that time and place, might be found the works of Kant, Hegel, Comte, Schlegel, and others, alongside the writings of many of the disobedient essayists — books rarely seen on the shelves of a prairie attorney. This penchant for speculative inquiries was another tie between him and Parker, who dealt with such themes in large and bold strokes, and whose intuitional philosophy appealed to his vivid and intuitive intellect. Having read the sermons of Parker on "Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology," he went off on another tramp, and if he brought back little game it was because in this forest the underbrush is dense and the turkeys fly very high:

Springfield, Ill., Feb., 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Friend: — I am troublesome I know, yet I am bothered, and want to free myself, if I can. I have an idea that there are no laws in nature as usually understood. I infer this from your three most excellent sermons on "Providence." My idea is, that this thing of Law is a fiction, is a generalization, not an abstraction in the school-man's sense, to assist human thought. The idea of Law is the economy of the human mind. I agree that there are order and method pervading nature, but do order and method make Law? If so, then eagles which come from the mint are produced, created, by law; for each dollar comes in due succession: they are identical, showing method. The truth is that these dollars come by force, and not Law; and you may pile order on order, and succession on succession, and method on method throughout the eternities, still you have not a Law: you have repetitions; but repetitions do not make Laws. I can repeat a complex fact always, still repetition does not constitute Law. Laws are inferences from known facts.

A rock falls to the ground, two, ten thousand fall, and we yelp gravitation — Law. What do I understand? Nothing. The wise man says, "Attraction is gravitation, and gravitation is attraction." Still what do I understand? Nothing. I see an eternal fact — not Law. Whilst the philosopher's notions of Law are evanescent, these facts are permanent. Do not misunderstand me. I see all these orders, successions, methods, harmonies, and beauties, and the great good God governing all, still my mind cannot see Law. I see a "special Providence" in the creation Might, the All-All, forever present and eternally creative, creating world and worm, zoophyte and man, fire and frost; but I cannot comprehend Law. If you say it is simply a method-path, whereby or whereon nature moves, then I say yea; but you force me to bow down and say Law when I cannot do so, in my heart. I am willing that the word "law" may be used, if it be understood thereby that all that is meant is method, order, and succession, or paths; but unwilling when you say Law and mean thereby an eternal rule in nature, objective to the mind. Law is a generalization of and in the mind, is a subjective concept in the Reason. Place it there and I am content. Law is not in nature as a property, attribute, quality, or essence. If it is, why not put it down in the categories of matter?

I have used the word "special Providence," and now let

me explain. I mean this: that God's providence is immediate as to time, special as to particulars, and universal as to matter and spirit, including all inorganic things and organic creatures; and thus He acts immediately, specially, and universally. His special Providence to man is man's nature; to fish, fish's nature; and I understand this much from your "Theism." Any other explanation is to me absurd. Order, succession, motion, beauty, worm and man, methods, apparent exceptions, all can work and flow without conflict here.

This opposition to the idea of Law did not, so far as I am concerned, come from Comte, Holyoke, or Lewis; but sprung up in me spontaneously when in school; but I was afraid to ask the teacher what was meant by Law. So I suffered and was ignorant. My ideas of technical theology, popular theology, are equally in the dark — not clear in that point. Fear is a horrible idea. A "monkey priest" is as cruel as the grave, and as cold.

Come and go to the nuclei of the winds and water currents, and what do you see? Nothing but constant modes of operation, paths, not Laws, which speak in the eloquence of Gulf Streams and Simoons. Come let us leap up into the uncolumned air and rest upon the spongy foundation, and there let us see satellite, planet, and sun; sea, air, and land. What do you see? Co-existences and successions, powers and forces, and consciously God — no Laws; but all, all governed by constant modes of operation, God the immediate cause. This is my philosophy. Am I wrong? I do not belong to the sensational school — at least do not know it. I would say to the philosophers, "Drive the ultimates upwards and downwards around the circle till they meet in God." Yours truly,

W. H. Herndon.

P. S. In your sermons on "Providence," which are eloquent, full of reason by ideas and analogy, there is a mistake in fact. This is a mistake in physiology. Beasts have pains in parturition and dentation. Excuse me.

IV

On the day following the inauguration of President Buchanan the Supreme Court decision of the Dred Scott case was announced, having been foreshadowed with ill-advised plainness in the inaugural address. It held, with a divided bench, it is true, that negroes could never become citizens of

the United States; that slaves must be regarded as property entitled to protection as such in every part of the Union; that temporary residence in a Free State did not give a negro freedom; and that the Missouri Compromise and similar prohibitory acts were unconstitutional, Congress having no power to pass them. Indeed, the Court went beyond the principle of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and held that even the people of a Territory could not, prior to its organization and administration as a State, exclude slavery from their midst; thus making "popular sovereignty" invalid, for there was no sovereignty where there was no option. Such was the majority opinion, written by Chief Justice Taney; the minority opinion by Justice Curtis took opposite ground; for the judges, instead of writing ordinary opinions, indulged in essays on all branches of the slavery question. Both sides dealt with matters not before the Court, giving the decision the color of a sectional debate, and as such it was received by the country. At last the fatal dualism of the nation had reached the supreme tribunal, and unless the Court could be made to reverse itself there was no appeal but to War.

Once again, as Lincoln had predicted, the South was flushed with triumph, and the North ablaze with wrath. The excitement increased and the North was in a veritable furore of indignation, which was unfortunately justifiable. Throughout the Free States, from legislative halls down to the smallest debating society, the decision was denounced as a conspiracy on the part of the Slave Power to fasten slavery upon the nation. Herndon excelled in reporting the storms of popular feeling, as may be seen in his letter to Parker a few days later:

Springfield, Ill., March 10, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — The import of your letter to me dated November, 1856, just after the Presidential election, rises up in its importance and becomes more plain, as the coin in it is heated before the fiery logic of sweeping events. Those three propositions stand out boldly; so that "he who runs may read." I understand that the South are determined to bend the North or break us in the attempt. They are evidently presenting this alternative: slavery for the whole

race of men in time, or freedom for every man of that race. I had always dreamed that this question would wear off and get more dim and less terrible in the distance — somewhat like a mirage when approached, slipping along over the sandy desert. But I am now beginning to be undeceived. I am not faith-ridden in this idea any longer. God preserve the Free and the Just!

Since I have written you a political letter, three grand events, for the pro-slave party, have happened: Firstly, the election of James Buchanan; Secondly, the new quarrels in Kansas; and Thirdly, the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the "Dred Scott Case." The first gives color to a pro-slavery election and administration; and it will be presumed, contrary to the truth, that the people wanted a nigger-driving servant in Mr. Buchanan, and crush things accordingly. The second springs from the first; and it shows this — that the pro-slavery party have Kansas beneath their iron heel, heated from the furnace of "hell," blasting and burning as they tread. A million men in Kansas this day could do Kansas no good, except in this — Revolution. The rights of majorities are taken away, and the rights of man wholly denied there. They have got the engine of despotism geared and organized with a working despoteratic institution. In my humble opinion Kansas will be a Slave State. If the South want it a Slave State it will be one; but if they can do better, if it will be to their interests and advantage to make it free, then it will be free — not otherwise. Not as Freedom wants; but as the nigger-makers see fit and proper to have it.

I was told confidentially the other day by a man who pretends to know — I think ought to know — that the people of Kansas would take no part in any elections, for convention, Legislature or otherwise, and that all elections would go by default; that it would be a Slave State spite of all human exertions from the free side; and that so soon as it was a State the people would *revolutionize*. This is all that can be done, as those people think. I see no other hope at present. This is terrible; but if the slave-makers will have it so — so be it. If the South will tap the dinner gong and call the wild, bony, quick, brave peoples to a feast of Civil War, and make this land quiver and ring from center to circumference, then I can but say "the quicker the better." I dread this whole matter. The issue is — Freedom or Slavery — War in time or Peace.

The third — the decision of the Supreme Court — set-

tles the question of the nationalization of slavery, wipes out State rights, crushes justice, defies right; says in short that the colored man is not a man, never shall be, was not made by God; drives back this hoping, burning age, so far as it can, into barbarism. I suppose that Court thinks it has settled agitation. Bah! "Whom the gods want to destroy they first make mad," is an old classic maxim. This old heathen saying is partially true; and seems very appropriately to apply to the southern hot-heads at this moment. Since the decision of the "Dred Scott Case" I have seen calm, cool, philosophic men grit their teeth and — swear. What are we to do, is the question now uppermost in all men's minds — in those hearts who love Liberty, and hate Slavery. What shall be done? How to do it? Shall bloody, deadly, internecine, savage, civil war wipe out error from the "black-board" of this democratic schoolhouse; or shall the lesson be carved deeply in it, to be read by noble youths as they shall spring on the stand in after ages? What say you? Can you not write me a few lines — give your ideas? Your friend,

W. H. Herndon.

Parker was ill and unable to reply, but Herndon went on pouring out his feelings, his letters becoming every day more intense, more vivid, and at times startlingly prophetic of coming events. He had an intuitive insight into the hearts of men, which made him open to their inward impulses, even before men were themselves aware what they were thinking and upon what motive they would act:

Springfield, Ill., March 30, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Friend: — Yours of March 17th is this moment at hand; and written as it informs me by the delicate hand of your wife. Had it been more lengthy I should have preserved it during life, but as it is, I thank her and you for it. I hope you will soon recover and be well and vigorous again. I want that vigor, like a vital battery, to play upon the fortifications of creeping, approaching despotism. I have tremblingly, throbbingly, and as rationally and cautiously as I could, turned and returned, split and divided, analyzed and compounded this question — the slave question — and I see no way open but cowardice in the North, a "back down" in the South, or — open, bloody, civil War. It is horrible. You will excuse my timidity

now and heretofore, as you are aware that almost all my relations live in the South, that that is my native country, my child-home. If, however, the worst comes I hope to act the part of a man — not cruelly, but firmly in humanity. I think you have confidence in me here.

I have just come off the circuit — not an orthodox Christian circuit, but a law circuit — and let me say to you this: the Supreme Court of the United States has ruined itself, cast off its dignity and thrown the rags in the face of the people. I suppose you know my standing as a lawyer among my profession. If you do not I will not say, but can say this much, that all the lawyers of any virtue or eminence in this central region curse the decision in the "Dred Scott Case." I have seen gloom on the faces of men but never saw the hell-gloom before. The people are stunned and are now ready to flee or fight — don't care which. There is a bitter time coming. Look out! Did you ever see an ox knocked down in a butcher's stall? So the people are hit right in the face; and did you ever see that ox rise and run reeling, wild, bleeding, bellowing, mad, furious, and destructive? So gather up this people their quivering spasmodic energy. I do not think there is much exaggeration in this — far from it. This decision, if it may be called one, is wicked, cruel, and will crush the Supreme Court, or destroy its power more than ten thousand political speeches from us Republicans. It is a wedge, as you say, sharp at the penetrating end, wide at the other. It enters, making but a small crack at first, but soon the object opens and widens till it is in twain. I shall never quote it, if I can help it, when Taney gives the decision. It is a despotocratic Court doomed to split, as the Northern and Southern church, the Northern and Southern people, the Northern and Southern gods. Hang to justice, love equity, do right, look up to God and hope — that is my motto; and I will execute all this, if I can, and too many temptations do not cross my path. In Illinois this day the Anti-Slavery spirit is more energetic, fiery, more daring, than ever. The end is not yet.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

In a note to Mrs. Parker, accompanying this letter, Mr. Herndon confessed his reason for writing to her husband, thereby answering a question which must by this time have been in the mind of the reader: "Let me say to you that the reason I write to him is this: he is about the only man living who

can hold me steady. That is a decided compliment. I never told him this much, but an opportunity is now afforded and I quickly seize the occasion. Excuse my rudeness." One week later he wrote again, as one who looked out upon an angry, storm-swept sea, and reported what he saw:

Springfield, Ill., April 8, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — The first thing is: I hope you are well, or at least getting so. You may not be fully recovered and therefore too feeble to study, and in this condition, a little gloomy and a little ill, you may desire to know how the healthy world moves. The spirit-world, the man-world, moves along grandly.

We have just heard from St. Louis this moment; they have had a municipal election there, and the emancipationists — the Republicans — have elected Mr. Weimer over Mr. Pratt, the candidate of the rich, cowardly Whigs and nigger-driving Democrats. The race was a hot one — felt here; but the spirit of Liberty is abroad. Thank God! The chains are rusted and cracking. Those are noble boys in St. Louis. They are Yankees mostly and Kentuckians. The Germans here are throwing high their hats; the Irish crouch and cower; they see their fate written on the wall. The Bible says, " place high " some sign " that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk 2:20.) You know it is generally quoted thus: " he may read that runs," but this is wrong. The sign is high and legible. Now I do not say all this, do not see with a philosophic eye all they feel, yet they feel and look just as I tell you. If instinctive sagacity, if intuition is correct, then is slavery to a certain extent doomed around this region. I see it in the countenances of the nigger-driving editors here. Their thoughts as seen floating in the eye and on the lip say this: " D—— Douglas, curse the Supreme Court; it made a foolish decision in the Dred Scott case; we are ruined. O! that we were back where we were in 1853." You know I am a kind of people's boy; I am with them, and when they do not know it I am pillowing my chin on my hand, looking right into their souls; and when I say to you, " There is something there of fire, of gloom, a calculated determination to flee, or fight out this nigger question — that even the voice tells of the disturbed soul, that the chin blabs, that the man is ablaze," you must believe me. I am not fooled as to present appearances. I am hard to fool here

among these people. They may step backwards soon, but now they would fight quickly — at the drop of a hat. This nigger question is deepening, broadening, heightening here, and I hope it may be continued forever — at least till there shall be no more slavery. I re-read your two speeches on the " Great Battle " yesterday; and when you are talking about pulling up weeds, and about the intuitions of Seward, etc., I think — aye.

We had an election here on yesterday and it turned out as follows: the Republicans were wholly defeated. We quarreled over temperance. We ran some Know-Nothings, and the Dutch to a man voted against this proceeding. We are whipped badly. I opposed all the whiskey issues — the Know-Nothings — but could do no good. We have learned a good lesson — do better next time.

I had, this morning, a most excellent " chat " with the Rev. Mr. Finley, of this State, about colonization. He is a very fine man — ideas as clear as a bell. His ideas are that the niggers are doomed to move off South gradually. He sees the Virginia moves and the Missouri moves in no other light than a move of the emancipationists. I had a most entertaining conversation on yesterday with one of the leading emancipationists of Missouri, and one of the leading Republicans of this State. Do not ask who they are — will tell you about it ere long. This is the substance of it: the *Missouri Democrat* is to open and bloom for Republicanism in 1860. The Louisville *Journal* is to follow, and some paper in Virginia is to fall into the trail, all of which is, as it were, to happen accidentally. The *Democrat* is simply to suggest, the *Journal* is to suggest still stronger, and at last all are to open wide for Republicanism. As these two men said. " We are to see the devil in these border States in 1860." These two men are more than ordinary men; the conversation was in my office, and was confidential; therefore I keep dark and request you to do so on the Missouri man's account — don't care for the Illinois man. You know the Illinois man. My little girl sends her respects.

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

We may guess that the two men were Frank Blair and Abraham Lincoln, who were at that time trying, with the aid of their friend George D. Prentice of the Louisville *Journal,* to make such a move. But the hope of the emancipationists, noble though it was in its just conservatism, was futile and doomed to failure. In the meantime Herndon — recently

appointed a bank examiner by Governor Bissell — betakes himself to the woods to escape the seething confusion of politics:

Springfield, Ill., May 14, 1857.

Mr. Parker,

Dear Sir: — It has been but a little time since I wrote to you, and I have not much news to send. Still, I have a word or two to say to you, by way of encouragement. I hope you are better than you were some time ago; hate to see you down in bed; know that it is annoying you. You are nervous and do not like to be still; do not like to be chained in any sense; yet your philosophy may teach you repose, contentment, rest without a growl. In this you have the advantage of me.

Well, since the decision in the Dred Scott case I have been among our people a great deal, and I can say to you that none like it, and some Democrats have been so bold as to repudiate the court and party. They stand up this day freemen in the best sense of the term, defying party hacks and throwing off old party associations. Since I wrote you I have conversed with many of my profession, and they scout the court and the reasons of the decision. This decision has hurt the court very much, has hurt the nigger-driving Democracy. Has not the stand Curtis has taken aided his waning popularity, his doubtful position? I think the nigger-driving court and the persecutions of the Southern press will drive Curtis to be an Abolitionist, if such a thing can be possible. You know the result better than I do or can.

This is enough about politics, and so let me turn to a more congenial subject. I became tired of books, office and court, on yesterday, and so took a walk in the wild woods, where I could see Nature in the face. It has been very cold for the last month, but within a few days spring seems to have sent her electricity along the earth and made her smile in flower blushes. In entering the woods the first thing that arrested my eye was our wild gooseberry bushes. They are out, in almost full leaf, and look fresh and lovely even in their thorns. As I crept amid the brush the catbird would flutter along just before me, sometimes on the ground and sometimes on a bush. The bluebell is up and in full bloom. You remember what you said about this universal flower. It is rather a pretty flower for the early spring. The lamb-tongue is up, full of life and vitality. The johnny-jumpups are smiling upwards with their deli-

cate but cunning laugh. These flowers are "game," and so the boys and girls gather hat-fulls and apron-fulls and have a fight. They have a peculiar turn of the neck just below the flower and this serves as a notch; and the boys and girls hitch one to the other and "pull out," and so the strongest and most wiry takes the day. Fraud and cunning are in this game, as well as in others. The knowing ones, boys and girls, run crooked pins up the stalks, and so make the pin do the deceitful service. Fraud and deception are twins to man. Look down into the eternal organizable fluid and see the germ cell: in it are crouched life and death — man and deception.

Let me quit this: it is ugly. Down the hollow I see, on an elm, several squirrels, hopping and chattering, and so I am going down to see what I can see. Here they are. They pay no attention to me; they know I have no gun, and so they can be saucy. The squirrels are after buds; they want something fresh and green to lave the winter's thirst — so long since they have had vegetables. A little fellow runs out as far as his limb and weight will let him. He cunningly puts out his paw and pulls the limb in and eats off the buds, and lets the limb fly back again. If I had a gun I think I could spat them off. This is, I know, cruel, yet I cannot help it. I remember what you said about the "dandy" shooting little birds. Every time I put a gun to my face I can see the "dandy" of whom you spoke. Do not liken him to myself or I shall go mad. To kill things for mere sport is cruel in the extreme, but we do not do it here. If we kill anything out here it is to eat, or to save poultry; and if this is no justification, then we must throw ourselves upon the universal custom, which is so aged that no man's mind runs to the contrary.

I move down to a small lake, one end of which runs into a creek. The lake is in the shape of a horseshoe, and near the creek fish have their sport. There they play and spawn upon the ripple. I am looking at a large bass, playing backwards and forwards, breathing leisurely, as if he were in air. The water is pure and clean. The fish is about two feet long, fat and nimble. Wave but a hand and he is off into the deep. He sees his shadow and supposes it is another fish, for he seems to woo it, twists his tail and wants to hug his shadow companion; yet it slips away from him. I love nature better than most men. My first love is God, then man, then nature. Yours truly,

W. H. Herndon.

V

Armed with the Dred Scott decision, Douglas hastened home to use it as a cudgel upon the heads of his Republican foes, whom he was anxious to brand as advocates of lawlessness, disunion, and negro equality. It suited his purpose to regard all who questioned the infallibility of the decision as anarchists who resisted the Supreme Court, and by raising a cloud of race antipathy and partisan rancor he sought to divert attention from his more difficult task of making the decision fit into his own doctrine of popular sovereignty. In his speech at Springfield, June 12th, he covered the opinion of Judge Taney with wreaths of eulogy while at the same time arguing that he had saved the principle of his pet dogma, whereas he had saved only the shadow of it. Nor should it pass unnoted that he here distinctly announced what was afterwards known as his "Freeport doctrine," and which was supposed to have lost him the South. Speaking of the right of a master to his slave in any Territory, which the court had upheld, he said:

> While the right continues in full force under the guarantees of the Constitution, and cannot be divested or alienated by an act of Congress, it necessarily remains a barren and worthless right, unless sustained, protected, and enforced by appropriate police regulations and local legislation, prescribing adequate remedies for its violation. These regulations and remedies must necessarily depend entirely upon the will and wishes of the people of the Territory, as they can only be prescribed by the local legislatures. . . . Hence the great principle of popular sovereignty and self-government is sustained and firmly established by the authority of this decision. . . . [Nor did he forget to ask:] When you confer upon the African race the privileges of citizenship, and put them on an equality with white men at the polls, in the jury box, on the bench, in the Executive chair, and in the councils of the nation, upon what principle will you deny their equality at the festive board and in the domestic circle?

Naturally such a mixture of sophistry and prejudice fanned the Republicans to a white heat of indignation, and their

words took fire. Herndon devoted several editorials to a review of the speech, or rather to a review of Douglas himself, whom he flayed unmercifully; and an excerpt from one of them may serve as an example of his editorial writing, and as a faithful picture of the seething state of the public mind. Writing in the *Daily Republican* of Springfield, under date of June 15th, he said:

> This speech of the Senator is his great central speech of 1857, which is to wave off to the shores of the State, preparatory to the Senatorial struggle of 1859. He is commencing the canvass early — is intensifying the heating and boiling strife, hoping thereby to allay the uprising bubbles. Poor man! We pity him! Does he suppose that the children of that people who in the reign of Henry I. enacted and passed this law — "Let no man, for the future, presume to carry on the practice of selling men in market like brute-beasts, which has hitherto been the custom of England" — will prove less "stubborn" than then for the rights of man? Poor creature of the Black Power! Does he dream that the men who sprang from the sires who declared that "resistance to tyrants was obedience to God," will be less "pestiferous" and "unruly" than when this immortal truth was uttered? Poor tool of Southern despots! Does he suppose that the children of those men who enunciated the God-generated truth "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights;" will basely hug their chains at the bidding of a demagogue?
>
> In truth the Douglas now is not the Douglas of 1850 or 1854. He is conscious of a power — the power of the people outraged, betrayed, wronged; and so he did not leap upon the stand with his accustomed force and defiant tone; he is somewhat cut; he is full of seeming humility; his long whip fore-finger did not crack so commandingly as was its wont. He appears pinched, cramped, shriveled up; his squat form is low and his voice harsh. When he would elevate his form to his inner thought his person would draw in, as if touched on the shoulder by the ghost-finger of Brown or some other patriot-spirit of Kansas, who had sealed his life by the blood of liberty. His gait and position were uneasy, as if there were beneath him the rattling bones of murdered patriots, struggling that they might rise up and confront in honorable combat the traitor to his country and the universal foe of man. Not for this

whole globe with all its wealth, pomp and gold, would we be Douglas — the iron-ball Senator from Illinois. We will review his speech more particularly in a day or so. In the meantime we shall study Douglas and his fate.

"Let tyrants, who hate truth and fear the free,
Know that to rule in slavery and error
For mere ends of personal pomp and power,
Is such a sin as doth deserve a hell
To itself sole."

Herndon did not disguise his contempt for Douglas, both personally and politically, and whenever he wrote or spoke about him his words took the form of impassioned and relentless philippic. This dislike was partly temperamental, partly spiritual, and it became more intense every year as he saw Douglas playing politics with the most sacred principles; though, as we shall see, in his last years Herndon was willing to modify some of his early judgments, but to the end he sincerely believed that Douglas was a demagogue, all the more dangerous because of his shrewd audacity, his resourcefulness, and his personal power. The article just quoted, which reads more like an oration than an editorial, was clipped and sent in a letter to Mr. Parker, who preserved it among his papers. The accompanying letter was even more severe:

Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Friend: — Enclosed is a piece of my scribbling for our *Republican*. I send to you, in place of a letter, this political article. I have been writing eight or ten articles for the *Republican*, reviewing Douglas's late speech. They are said to be good. I do not send this to "show off," but to let you know what I am doing. Hope you will like the tone of the articles. . . . Douglas spoke here as represented: Lincoln will answer. *It will be an answer.* I know both men well, for long, long years. Lincoln is a gentleman; Douglas is — well, what shall I say? — an unscrupulous dog. He is a hybrid; Nature says to him Perish and Rot! What is the matter with you? Are you offended?

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

Lincoln did make answer on June 26th, calmly analyzing and dissecting the speech of Douglas as though he were arguing

a case in court. Herndon seems to have been disappointed with the temperature of the reply, which, beyond its dialectical skill in making Douglas undo Douglas, and a notable passage about negro equality, lacked fire. One has only to read the speech side by side with the editorial to see the contrast between the two men; one quick, impulsive, and oftentimes precipitate, the other coolly piling up his wrath and strength for a future sweeping and gigantic blow. Said Lincoln:

> Judge Douglas does not discuss the merits of the decision, and in that respect I shall follow his example, because I could no more improve on McLean and Curtis than he could on Taney. He denounces all who question the correctness of the decision, as offering violent resistance to it. But who resists it? Who has, in spite of the decision, declared Dred Scott free, and resisted the authority of his master over him? . . . But we think the Dred Scott decision is erroneous. We know the court that made it has often overruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it overrule this. We offer no resistance to it. . . . Why, this same Supreme Court once decided a national bank to be constitutional; but General Jackson, as President of the United States, disregarded the decision, and vetoed a bill for a recharter. . . . Again and again I have heard Judge Douglas denounce that bank decision and applaud General Jackson for disregarding it. It would be interesting for him to look over his recent speeches, and see how exactly his fierce philippics against us . . . fall upon his own head.
>
> Three years ago, Judge Douglas brought forward his famous Nebraska Bill. The country was at once ablaze. . . . Since then he has seen himself superseded in a Presidential nomination, . . . and he has seen that successful rival constitutionally elected, not by the strength of friends, but by the division of adversaries, being in a popular minority of nearly four hundred thousand votes. He has seen his chief aids in his own State, Shields and Richardson, politically speaking, successively tried, convicted, and executed for an offence not their own, but his. *And now he sees his own case standing next on the docket for trial.*
>
> Now I protest against the counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not

have her for either. I can just let her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands, without asking leave of anyone else, she is my equal and the equal of all others. . . . But Judge Douglas is especially horrified at the thought of the mixing of blood by the white and black races. . . . On this point we fully agree with the Judge, and when he shall show that his policy is better adapted to prevent amalgamation than ours, we shall drop ours and adopt his. Let us see. . . . Statistics show that slavery is the greatest source of amalgamation, and next to it, not the elevation, but the degradation of the free blacks. Yet Judge Douglas dreads the slightest restraints on the spread of slavery, and the slightest human recognition of the negro, as tending horribly to amalgamation!

As Douglas went on with his speaking tour, by some slip of type or lip he began to misquote the Declaration of Independence, making it read "all men *were* created equal," instead of "*are* created equal." Herndon was quick to make note of the discrepancy in his editorials, charging that Douglas was deliberately perverting the words and making one speech for the North and another for the South. It seems that one rendering appeared in the Springfield *State Register,* another in the *Missouri Republican,* and still another in the Chicago *Times,* which was singular to say the least. The *State Register* explained that it was due to a typographical error sufficiently obvious to any one not "triply endowed with the manners of a ruffian, the honesty of a rogue, and the intellect of a fool." But Herndon persisted, and indeed made out a very good case, which he used after this manner in the *Daily Republican,* June 20th:

> "When shall we three meet again?
> In thunder, lightning, or in rain!"

In the year 1854, Mr. Petit, a sham Democratic Senator, rose in the United States Senate, and said that the Declaration of American Independence was "a self-evident lie." An itinerant nigger preacher, Mr. Ross, a sham Democratic high priest, so late as 1857, says that the Declaration of Independence is absurd; and now, in the month of June, A. D. 1857, here in this city, Senator Douglas says the Dec-

laration of American liberty is *untrue*. He is polite in his epithets.

We are surprised that Douglas should follow a negro man, a black nigger priest, and pronounce the glorious Declaration of American Independence an untruth — a self-evident falsehood — a lie and a political farce which has played out its day upon the boards. However, Mr. Douglas did it, and we appeal to the audience who heard his speech here in the capitol, June, A. D. 1857, and beneath the stars and stripes floating proudly above him. We appeal to his printed speech for substantial proof of this charge. We are willing to acknowledge that he did not say it was false, though he said it was not true generally; but he intended to convey to the uninitiated that it was a palpable lie. Petit — Ross — Douglas,

> "When shall we three meet again?
> In thunder, lightning or in rain!"

Herndon sent this editorial, with others, to Parker, along with a rapid fire of letters urging him to use them against Douglas in New England, which Parker very properly neglected to do. The letters, marked "private," were brief, excited and hasty, and may be summarized under one date as follows:

Springfield, Ill., July 4, 1857.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — Thanks for yours of the 24th inst. I did as you requested — gave Mr. Lincoln your best wishes. He returns them. I send you this day one of Mr. Lincoln's speeches in the *State Journal*. Douglas's speech was a low, gutter-rabble rousing speech. Lincoln's was gentlemanly, strong, and conclusive. The difference is very apparent. Sorry you are sick.

I am still at duty in the ocean of Illinois politics. Douglas has made a speech here as you know, but he has made two different editions, one for the North, one for the South; one in the *State Register*, one in the *Missouri Republican;* different in substance, in essence. It ought to kill him. Do you know how it will affect him — quoted Declaration of Independence two ways — not an accident, done for effect, thought it would not be discovered. . . . Let's kill off the great Dough Face! . . . I want to let you see where Douglas is drifting. I now send you his last bid, and that is no less than utter prostration of human liberty and rights in Kansas. What a scoundrel! After reading

hand to Phillips. Good God! are not the Democrats crazy?

I herewith send you a forgery on Lincoln and Trumbull: it appeared in the *State Register* July 2, 1857; that of the *Times* on July 1st. The *Register* article, in double column, is a base, wilful forgery — never was in either of the speeches. Do not fail to keep what I send you till you or Mr. Phillips let off a gun.

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

The "forgery" referred to was an attempt of the *State Register* to array Lincoln against Trumbull, using the "deadly parallel" to show from their own words that one advised submission to the Dred Scott decision, and the other resistance to it. Such apparent conflict of opinion between "these two great black Republican pop guns" filled the *Register* with glee, and it was unable to tell which was "the true black Republican, and which the bogus." Such tactics only amused Lincoln, while they angered Herndon almost beyond measure; but a more distressing matter now engaged the latter:

Springfield, Ill., July 29, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — I send you to-day three speeches; one by Senator Douglas; one by Senator Trumbull; and one by Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln has gone to New York or he would have sent them to you himself. However, I will do as well for this small duty. We are cutting the iron-chain Democracy to the quick: they feel it; they show they feel it — show it in looks, acts, maneuvers. Douglas has confessed his blunder to his private friends, who have by design or by accident let it leak out. One thing is assuredly certain: our country people say, irrespective of party, that Douglas was whipped for once. I have heard this "many and many a time."

When I wrote you last I did not think I should write you so soon again; yet such unheard-of proceedings have taken place here, that I cannot refrain. A slave was arrested in Logan County and brought here for trial. He was poor as a matter of course, and I freely volunteered for the poor fellow; but in doing so I came near having my own rights stricken down in court by my own brother. It was contended that I had no right to appear in court for the negro. I repelled this in strong language, if I may say so. The poor negro was tried and sent South — could

not prevent it. You cannot do anything when the iron-chain logic is around the man and fetters are on his limbs. I send this to let you see that I am not afraid to do openly what I write privately. Look at it from this point and this point alone. Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

P. S. The reason why I wrote to you and said "private" not long since was on Mr. Lincoln's account, not my own. Base politicians would charge him with sending you matter. That was the reason and that alone that made me say "private."

No doubt Lincoln, knowing that Douglas was eager to link him with the Abolitionists, and thus fasten the odium of that name upon him, had warned Herndon about urging Mr. Parker to attack Douglas for his local tricks. At last Mr. Parker found time for a brief reply, commending Herndon for his efforts in behalf of the fugitive slave and expressing his own disgust at the Dred Scott decision:

Newton Center, Mass., Aug. 9, 1857.

Dear Mr. Herndon:

I thank you for sending me the slips from the newspaper, and still more for the noble defence you made of the rights of the poor, unfortunate man. Of course it was unavailing! "On the side of the oppressor there was power." The Democratic party is in office and it has the same relation to progress in America that the Roman Catholic Church has in Europe. We can do nothing until that party is broken to fragments and ground to powder. You see all the Democratic conventions in all the States, pass resolutions in favor of the Dred Scott decision, with its falsification of testimony and its prostitution of law. The Supreme Court will decide that it is unconstitutional to prohibit the importation of slaves, and the Democrats will endorse the decision. Yours truly, THEO. PARKER.

In more than one brief note Parker had sent his best wishes to Lincoln, though the name of Lincoln does not appear in the long list of his political correspondents. This would be stranger if Parker had not had in Herndon a mediator through whom he could express his approval of Lincoln's course from time to time; at other times his doubts. Apparently they never met, but a few months later we find Parker standing out emphatically against the attempt of

Greeley to induce the Republicans of Illinois to desert Lincoln. Replying to the above letter, Mr. Herndon wrote in a mood of mingled hope and gloom — hope for the future of his party in Illinois, with dark forebodings as to the future of the nation:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 8, 1857.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — I received your very encouraging letter some time since, for which I am obliged. I was in court when it came, or should have answered sooner. . . . In attending to the poor negro's case I felt I was doing my duty, and did not care for personal consequences to myself. I simply asked myself this question, "Is it right?" Having determined that I went into the matter with all my energy and ability, though little and small. Some say it was bold for this section and not very prudent, as I was a kind of Republican school-master, or what not: others say it was outrageously wrong, as it will set a bad example to young lawyers who will follow. God grant they may ever do so. Others, the good and the true, cry "Well done," and so the world wags.

I have been philosophizing on our State lately, and have come to this conclusion: that Illinois is forever gone from the iron-chain Democracy, if the Anti-Slavery men act prudently in putting up brave and good men. The reason why I say Illinois is gone, "hook and line," from the Democracy, is this: five out of every seven Fillmore men will go to the Republican cause: there is about 30,000 of them, and giving the Republicans 21,000 and the Democrats 9,000, and taking Buchanan's majority at 7,000, we have the tyrants on the hip, with a majority in our favor of about 7,000. When we see immigrants coming in, and knowing that four out of five of them are for us, we cannot doubt longer how Illinois is to stand politically in the future. I have talked with others and they wholly agree with me. Some go farther and are more enthusiastic in their calculations than I am. The north of our State is filling up with an unprecedented rapidity, and that section is wholly free, as you know. The South is filling up but slowly, and those who come are generally for freedom — a majority are so.

The late negro murders — butcheries — have done us good: it has waked up the idle and indifferent to see. What is to become of this land? I *see,* but will not talk even to

you. Kansas will be shot into the confederacy, over the heads of the Free States, a kind of free-slave State — a mongrel thing, abnormal and un-godly in appearance. Buchanan is this day no better than "poor Pierce." His administration crouches at the tyrant feet of the slave-driver and whines to hear the word, "Go bull." This is even so, and no man who reads, thinks, philosophizes on history and nature, can help seeing the "Red Sea" over which our people must pass. It is terrible to think about.

Nature will have her equilibrium. In proportion as we become civilized North; in proportion to our love of freedom North, just in the same degree does the South barbarize and hate Liberty. We widen and deepen in our views; the line of separation becomes sharp and well-defined, and out of this come hate and bloody war. Can anything escape this? Nothing! God alone, even if he desired to do so, cannot turn away the catastrophe. Historians in the future will simply write, "Horror! Horror!"

Are you writing anything soon to be published? I hope you are; but first I hope you are entirely well, or fast getting so. Hope soon to hear you thunder. Phillips is climbing, is he not? Hurrah for Phillips!

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

And the historian of today does marvel that a people so homogeneous and so happy, so wedded in historic memories, found no better way of getting rid of African slavery than by going to war about it. He marvels that a people so prosperous as the people of the South, living the ideal life of patrician and planter, should have so mismeasured the forces of the time and the movements of the world. Men North and South saw the conflict coming, but none the less they flung wisdom to the winds, as at a later hour they drew their swords and threw the scabbards away.

CHAPTER V

The Revolt of Douglas

After all, history is only past politics, and we have now to deal with a crisis which historians of this period too often slur over in their haste to recite the story of the great debates. Those burning pictures in the letters to Parker were as much before the eyes of Lincoln as of Herndon, and they had drawn from him that radical Bloomington speech in which, for the first time in public, he had used his striking figure of the house divided against itself; though at the request of a less radical friend, Judge Dickey, he had promised not to repeat it during the contest of 1856. Time had more than justified his words, for the gulf of cleavage was becoming every day wider and more angry; but just when the hour had fully come for a decisive word, he was appalled by the fact of schism in the ranks of his own party.

More surprising still, as if planned by that mocking irony whereby politics makes strange yoke-fellows, the cause of this schism was none other than Douglas himself, whose fate it was to be " the Genius of Discord " incarnate. Unable to manage two horses going in opposite directions, that daring and ambitious rider was actually trying to harness a Republican steed to his chariot and drive to victory. That he did not succeed in his bold and desperate attempt, but fell at last bruised and defeated in the arena, was due to the courage, sagacity, and unwavering fidelity of the Republican party in Illinois, led by Lincoln and his friends. The tale of this adventure is more exciting than a romance, since it made Illinois the pivotal State in the North, as South Carolina may be said to have been the pivotal State in the South, in the contest that followed.

I

Once more Kansas came to the fore, and again the nation was torn by angry emotions, while an honest, but timid and pliable old man sat in the White House. Emboldened by the Dred Scott decision, the leaders of the South resolved afresh to foist slavery upon that unhappy Territory, and thus add another Slave State to the Union. This had to be done, if done at all, against the will of the people; for by this time the Free-State men so vastly outnumbered the slavery contingent, that even the pro-Slavery party had to admit it. So, in 1857, the Slavery party made its last desperate attempt to capture the Territory by fraud, and the folly of the Free-State men opened the way. It was a terrible blunder, with consequences that were far-reaching for Kansas and for the nation.

Two years before Lincoln had predicted, in his letter to Joshua Speed, that such would be the phase of the Kansas question when it became a practical one, and his prophecy had come true. At an election of delegates to a constitutional convention the Free-State men, very unwisely, refused to vote, on the ground that the number of delegates was based on a defective census and registration. This gave the convention, which met at Lecompton, wholly into the hands of the pro-Slavery party, and they drew the constitution as they wanted it. When the instrument was offered to the people, they were not allowed to vote simply yea or nay, but only "For the constitution with slavery," or "For the constitution with no slavery." Either way the constitution would be adopted, and should the constitution with no slavery be ratified, a clause of the schedule still guaranteed "the right of property in slaves now in this Territory." So that the choice offered to an opponent of slavery was between a document throwing down all barriers against slavery, and a document which sanctioned and protected the full possession of slaves in the Territory, with no assurance as to the status of the natural increase of those slaves. Again the Free-State men refrained from voting, and a few more than six thousand votes were declared to have been cast "For the constitution

with slavery." Over one-third of the votes cast were proved to be fraudulent, but as the residue still exceeded the requisite majority the scheme had the disguise of legal technicality.

Finding themselves tricked by a gambler's device, the Free-State men had in the meantime abandoned their policy of non-resistance, so far at least as to take part in the election of a new Territorial Legislature. They had also decided to make an irregular opportunity to vote for or against the constitution; but this time the pro-Slavery men, considering the matter already legally settled, refused to vote. The result was a majority of ten thousand against the constitution, and an equally decided majority in both chambers of the Legislature. The President had solemnly pledged himself to accept the result of the popular vote; but now he was confronted by two popular votes, one having the better technical showing, while the other undeniably expressed the will of a large majority of the lawful voters. Such was the posture of affairs when Congress convened.

Douglas had made himself sponsor for justice to Kansas, not only by his advocacy of "popular sovereignty" in the abstract, but by the fact that he had become personally responsible for the conduct of John C. Calhoun, the leader of the Lecompton party — having secured for him, through Governor Walker,[1] the office of Surveyor General of the Territory. He had swallowed the Dred Scott decision without wincing, denouncing all who questioned its righteousness as revolutionists, while at the same time showing how it might be thwarted by unfriendly local legislation; but the Lecompton outrage nauseated him, and he let it be known to his friends that he would oppose the admission of Kansas, either as Free or Slave State, on a constitution adopted by such methods. Rumors were afloat that the Lecompton scheme was approved by the admin-

[1] Robert J. Walker, former Secretary of the Treasury, a Southern man appointed by Mr. Buchanan and endorsed by Douglas. When Governor Walker was on his way to Kansas he passed through Chicago, and Senator Douglas consulted him about submitting the constitution of Kansas to a fair vote; and it was so agreed. — *Covode Report*, pp. 105-6. Speech of Douglas at Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 14, 1860.

istration, and Douglas hastened to Washington, determined to know the mind of the President at once; his own was made up. Their interview, as the Senator recounted it, was dramatic indeed when he found that Buchanan was under the spell of a group of Southern men who were bent on making Kansas a Slave State at any cost. Whereat Douglas threw down the gauntlet, announcing with great earnestness that he would fight the scheme publicly and to the bitter end.

> "Mr. Douglas," said the President, rising to his feet excitedly, "I desire you to remember that no Democrat ever yet differed from an administration of his own choice without being crushed. Beware of the fate of Tallmadge and Rives!"
>
> "Mr. President," rejoined Douglas also rising, "I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead!" [1]

Such a retort — contrasting the weakest of Presidents with the most headstrong — was all the more stinging when we recall that, from 1852 to 1860, Douglas was by far the most noteworthy figure on the national political scene. Webster, Clay, and Calhoun had passed off the stage. Seward, Sumner, and Chase, though influential and able, had not yet come to their own. This interval of eight years belonged to Douglas, and it was neither vanity nor vehemence for him to imagine that he could defy the President. We have also to remember that he and Buchanan had been rivals for the same high office, the latter securing it partly because, as Minister to England, he had not been involved in the Nebraska agitation, and partly because he was less aggressive and more pliable. Douglas, whatever else he may have been, was not of that stripe. Astute and ambitious, he was at once masterful and persuasive, a born leader of men, skilled in all the devious arts of politics, and an orator who combined "something of the impressiveness of Webster with the roughness and readiness of the stump speaker." [2] His break with the President meant a battle royal

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, pp. 327-8 (1908). Also, Milwaukee speech of Senator Douglas, Oct. 14, 1860, Chicago *Times and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1860.

[2] *Abraham Lincoln*, by J. T. Morse, Vol. I, p. 106 (1896).

to the last ditch, for never was there a more resourceful or a more plucky fighter.

On the evening of December 9th, Douglas backed up his threat by a speech in the Senate, and so eager was the desire to hear him, that, from the time the Senate adjourned in the afternoon, until it re-assembled in the evening, the people kept their seats. For three hours he held his audience in rapt attention, broken only by peals of applause, while with more than his usual gravity and earnestness he denounced the Lecompton fraud, appealed for fair play, and flayed the President for attempting to dictate the duties of a Senator. His sense of justice was too deeply outraged for him to remain in a conciliatory mood, and at times his vehemence carried him further than he had meant to go. He compared the Kansas election to that held under the First Consul, when, so his enemies averred, Napoleon addressed his troops after this fashion: "Now, my soldiers, you are to go to the election and vote freely just as you please. If you vote for Napoleon, all is well; vote against him, and you are to be instantly shot!" That was a fair election!

> This election, said Douglas with bitter irony, is to be *equally fair*! All men in favor of the constitution may vote for it — all men against it shall not vote at all! Why not let them vote against it? . . . Consult the poll books on a fair election held in pursuance of law; consult private citizens from there; consult whatever source of information you please, and you get the same answer — that this constitution does not embody the will, is not the act and deed of the people, does not represent their wishes; and hence, I deny your right, your authority, to make it their organic law. . . . Will you force it on them against their will simply because they would have voted it down if you had consulted them? If you will, are you going to force it upon them under the plea of leaving them perfectly free to form and regulate their own domestic institutions in their own way? Is that the mode in which I am called upon to carry out the principle of self-government and popular sovereignty in the Territories? . . . If Kansas wants a Slave constitution she has a right to it, if she wants a Free-State constitution she has a

> right to it. It is none of my business which way the slavery clause is decided. *I care not whether it is voted up or down.*

Lincoln, in his back office, made note of this last sentence for future reference; and he thereby put his pen upon the fatal flaw in the career of Senator Douglas. All during this heroic fight for the freedom of Kansas Douglas declared that, had the people of that Territory decided in favor of slavery, he would just as earnestly and persistently fight against the Free-Soilers for the admission of the Territory as a Slave State. To the question of the right and wrong of slavery, so far as this controversy was concerned, he was entirely indifferent. Unfortunately he remained indifferent, as though utterly blind to the moral issue involved in the very existence of slavery. None the less he did fight, consistently and magnificently, for the rights of the Free-State men of Kansas, many of whom were Douglas Democrats, and the Lecompton constitution was buried out of sight. It is true, as Lincoln afterwards said, that the Republicans in Congress gave most of the votes necessary to defeat it; yet it is also true that but for Douglas the infamy would not have been defeated.[1] His victory over Buchanan was decisive, extending even to the parlors of social rivalry, where the gracious and brilliant Adele Douglas out-shone the handsome but somewhat reserved niece of the President, who served as "first lady of the land" for her bachelor uncle.[2]

Nevertheless, there were those who saw not the faintest gleam of high, disinterested motive in the audacious revolt of the Senator from Illinois. Men like Lincoln, Herndon, and Gustave Koerner, who had known Douglas for years, saw in his action only the first move in some far-reaching political game, the exact nature of which they did not at first divine. Herndon, writing to Parker after a long silence, gave his view of the situation, which may be taken as representing Lincoln's view of it; for he was closer to the mind of Lincoln than any other man, and could report him, not always correctly, yet with much shrewdness and intution:

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Clark E. Carr, pp. 62-74 (1909).

[2] *Reminiscences of Peace and War*, by Mrs. Roger Pryor, Chap. IV.

Springfield, Ill., December 19, 1857.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — It has been a long time since I addressed you a letter, and supposing you are rested I propose to slip a word to you. These are curious, mysterious days. What do you think of Douglas's late strike from his masters? We out here have this view: He, Douglas, is U. S. Senator, and still wants to be. If he go the Lecompton swindle he is dead in Illinois; and being defeated here, and for that office, he is dead everywhere, North and South; it is a test for the future. However, if he "bulges" against the Lecompton fraud, he is at all events gone in the South. Hope springs up and comes to his despair. He says this:

"I see my way clear. The North has got the majority in the electoral college, and if I oppose this despotism and strike as a man, good, brave and true, I can get the solid North. By doing this my first expectation is that I can get back in the Senate, and in the meantime I will go gradually towards Republicanism, and finally deeper. That won't do right now. I know the law of the gradual development of ideas. Before 1860 Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington, and probably more States will have to come into this confederacy, and these will give such an overwhelming majority to the North, that it can beat the South. I am for Freedom, Liberty! Mr. Parker or Wendell Phillips worships no more sincerely or intensely at the shrine of Liberty than I. Hurrah for Liberty! It is eternal; an attribute of God given to man as an inalienable right! Blessed day, I am safe! Glory!"

I have no doubt but that this is the Senator's reason — none in the world. But the question is, will he, "like a man," face the music, and so keep faced? There is the rub. I have no confidence in him morally, mentally, politically, or otherwise. His friends here do not know how to look upon this change. However, they say this: "Republicanism always before Southern tyranny; the South is nothing but a despotism." They do this with great energy and emphasis. And thank the bright stars for so much! Buchanan has numerous friends here; Douglas has more. The war between them is fierce, fiery, full of hate. Douglas will not reap any advantage from this move, *though Freedom will.* Mark that. The Buchanan faction here will kill him for the Senatorial seat. He has slipped, I *think*: it is too much now to say this will be so. There are not facts enough out yet to declare this is and must be so; it looks that way.

My notion of this move, if not a base trick, is this: Douglas will be a ranting Free-State's man — hot and angrily so. There are but two sides. If he breaks loose from the South, he must become Republican, or go deeper and eclipse Phillips. Tell Mr. Phillips to guard his laurels: say to him that his friend Herndon says, "Phillips, you have a competitor in the field." Be not surprised at what Douglas does — either one way or the other. Douglas speaks glibly, already, of the "fundamental principles of Liberty." Watch the blazing comet. There will be many foul disclosures in this fight. They will tell each other of treachery — of each other's rascality: they will taunt each other, and the age and freedom will profit by the quarrel. Robbers have fallen out over the distribution of their bloody booty. The quarrel will be long and bitter, wild and ferocious. Let honest men look on, and laugh or weep, as suits their respective natures. I shall mourn, yet rejoice.

The South will "snub" Douglas, and to defend or revenge himself he will fight back, and in doing so he must feel around for "clubs." The only clubs are, first, Republican ones; and, second, strong Abolition ones: the first are composed simply of policy, the second of world-wide truths — eternal as world-wide. Look out! If Douglas is fighting for revenge its laws will keep him destructive, and so look out! It is not virtue that moves him. If this move of Douglas is simply one of revenge, I do not know what to say. Too soon to say absolutely this or that. I think, however, that the first part of this letter is the only correct view of things, so far as they are developed. Our June and July fight here with Douglas has opened his eyes. Do you remember that his *Times* said that the "Lecompton constitution might as well be submitted to the Feegee tribes as to the people of Kansas?" What is your opinion of things? How do the Massachusetts men look upon this "squabble?"

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

Give Mr. Phillips my best respects, not forgetting your wife. Show this letter to any person who wants to know how we feel out West.

Only three Democratic Senators dared to stand with Douglas — Broderick of California, Pugh of Ohio, and Stuart of Michigan — as against the solid phalanx of his party. Green, Bigler, and Fitch in turn assailed him on the floor of the Senate, trying to read him out of the party into the ranks of the "Black

Republicans." These attacks only roused Douglas to more bitter invective against the Lecompton scheme as "a trick, a fraud upon the rights of the people." If he had misjudged the temper of his party in the Senate, he had at least read aright the drift of public sentiment in Illinois, for, of the fifty-six Democratic papers in the State, only one ventured to condone the Lecompton outrage. Writing one week later, Herndon continued his prognostication, astutely divining the drift of Douglas towards the Republican ranks:

Springfield, Ill., December 26, 1857.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I wrote you some few days since, and hope you will take it easy till I give you my speculations and the ideas of others, in the home of Douglas and in reference to him and his course. It will be here that his intentions will leak out, or be made known before they are blurted wild and free in Washington. I have some warm personal friends in the Democratic camp, and some kindred there. So I watch things closely. It is said here that Douglas intends to stand firm on this Kansas-Nebraska Bill; but those who say so know nothing about the wiry, deep, sagacious schemer. Whoso stands on this Kansas squatter sovereignty, expecting thereby to appease the North or South, will fall between the "upper and nether mill-stones" to be ground to powder. Douglas is sagacious — is not a martyr, nor has he an *idea* of being one. Were he Phillips or yourself it might be so; it would be the same, if he were Garrison; but there is no martyr in the flesh of Douglas. If he supposes that he can say, "the fundamental principles of Liberty," and *insinuate* the justice of rebellion and revolution in Kansas by the people, as he did say and insinuate lately, openly in the halls of Congress, and still expect to appease the South; if, I say, he thinks this, I will write Douglas down as an "ass." He is not, however. He is sagacious, energetic, "wicked," as you say, and he looks and will eternally leap for power. Its laws will control him, as justice Garrison, or truth Phillips, or religion you.

Douglas must sweep the field I pointed out to you sooner or later — say 1860 or 1864. He may not move in a perfect elliptic; there will be some perturbations behind that red infamy, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; yet the ends of the circle will meet. So says nature; for her mental laws are as uni-

versal and necessary as the laws of the physical world. Douglas is this day Republican in heart and head, though not from honest, deep, manly convictions; he is so because power lies there, in the North, and where power is *there is the political buzzard.* Some say that he will force Buchanan and his cabinet to swallow his present interpretation of the Kansas fraud. What! Do they suppose that this is not defeat to the South, and defeat to the South forever? Does any sane man suppose that the South will give up this great crisis without a struggle, to rot and to die inch by inch, stinking in the nostrils of the nations? Those who think so ought to have "fool" branded on their paws.

Mr. Douglas will in due time become a Republican and attempt to lead our forces, and I may have to vote for the wretch. I will do so to kill a worse thing — slavery. This, Douglas will do by continuous, gradual slides, and such a sliding scale the world never saw. This is his present intention, or he sinks into that gulf where the nations can never hear his howl; and from the depths of which the whisperings of his conscience will scarcely ever reach the throne of God. He must go South or come North, radically. He sees and knows where he is: he understands his position and its danger well. He has studied the alternatives "piously." It may be true that this will take place: either Douglas must come to Republicans, or the Republicans must go to Douglas. No doubt but that Douglas will *try to draw us to his support*; but this will never be. When Douglas sees this he will be ready to take the leap with a sonorous shout, "Hurrah for Liberty!" Won't that be odd? All these late moves are compliments to human rights, to man's freedom and God's eternal justice. God speed their quick evolution and development!

I notice in the winds several good signs "round here," and all about us. Democrats come to us and borrow Seward's speeches, Sumner's, your Nebraska speech, Chase's, etc.; and they read them and shout for Liberty as I did, when I was called "crazy." The world does move.

Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

Excuse me, forgive my two long letters. Show to friends if you wish. Tell Phillips to sit right down and get out his speeches — now is the time.

No doubt Lincoln, with his keen eye for the logic of events, saw the situation even more clearly than his partner; but he said

little, while watching intently to see whither Douglas was tending. The two letters of Herndon were indeed remarkable as forecasts of the immediate future, though surely they were unjust in attributing every move of Douglas to motives utterly selfish and sordid. Yet such was the view of Mr. Parker, who in his reply arraigned Douglas more severely, if possible, than Herndon had done, while at the same time reporting the outlook from his watch-tower in the East:

Boston, Mass., Dec. 31, 1857.

Hon. W. H. Herndon.

Dear Sir: — I thank you for your two valuable and instructive letters. It is a strange state of things now, but quite encouraging. Look at some facts:

I. The South has determined on two things to be done immediately: (1) To make Kansas a Slave State. (2) To capture and "re-annex" Nicaragua.

II. The North on the whole is determined that Kansas shall not thus be made a Slave State — but a considerable party yet hopes it will be, they care not how. This party consists of two divisions: (1) Partisan Democrats who hold office or seek for it; (2) Old Whigs and Know-Nothings who care only for money. But these two are in a minority. In Boston they are represented by the federal officers and such men as Everett, Winthrop, Choate, and the like. The great bulk of the people are opposed to slavery in Kansas, always excepting the Irish — they are by instinct friendly to slavery. This comes partly from their nature, partly also from their position at home, which has so degraded the poor wretches, and partly from the conduct of their priests who follow the logic of their institution and defend slavery.

I don't think the North is much opposed to the conquest of Nicaragua, and the rest of mankind. The strong passion of the Saxon is — lust for land. It is so with the British Saxon, so with the American. It was so a thousand years ago. The blood of the old filibusters, the Danes and Normans, is yet in the people. But the Northern men think it may be dangerous to conquer such a territory. They know it is wrong to invade a people who do us no harm. So they moderately oppose Walker and his troop.

III. The President is an old man, a man of feeble will, of no ideas — vacillating in his measures, but firm in one

principle — to take care of James Buchanan. But he was chosen by the South, at the command of the South; on a platform of the South he was sworn into office. He will therefore be forced to yield to the logic of Southern ideas. There is a manifest destiny in that which no will could escape. But he wishes to keep all the party together; to attempt in words to conciliate the North while in deeds he obeys his stern masters at the South. Hence his vacillation in regard to Walker and Kansas, to Nicaragua, to the great financial question.

Now as the Northern institutions and the Southern are founded on ideas exactly opposite and antagonistic, and as the logic thereof impels the people in opposite directions, it is plain that one of three things must happen: (1) The South may conquer the North; (2) The North may conquer the South; (3) The two may separate without a fight. I need not say which is likely to happen.

Douglas finds his term is nearly out in the Senate; he knows we will not be re-elected if he continues facing to the South. If he fails of the Senatorship in '59 he fails of the Presidency in 1860 or 1864. He is ambitious, unprincipled, coarse, vulgar, but strong in the qualities which make a "democratic" leader. He has served the South all along, but the South would not pay him with the nomination in 1856. He seeks his revenge on its nominee, and on the South itself — while he shall advance his own interest. So he opposes the attempt to force slavery on Kansas. He claims that he does this in consistency with his Kansas-Nebraska Bill and his doctrine of squatter sovereignty. But he is more inconsistent than it appears at first. For not only did he (1) favor Toombs's Bill, but (2) the Kansas-Nebraska Bill with its squatter sovereignty was not a principle of his political philosophy — but only a measure of his political aim to move the South for his own advancement. So he is now not only obviously inconsistent with his special support of Toombs's Bill, but secretly and profoundly inconsistent with his whole course of action and uniform adhesion to the South, and his perpetual mock at freedom and its supporters.

He is a mad-dog who has grown fat by devouring our sheep. He was trained to that business — this bloodhound of the South. But as his master has not fed him as he hoped, he turns round and barks at those whom he once obeyed whenever they whistled for him and bit whomsoever they told him to seize. I have no more faith in him now

than two years ago. But he is biting our enemies. "Dog eat dog," says the Turk; "Dog eat wolf," say I, "bite 'em, take hold on 'em, stibboy!"

Here is his plan of action. He sees the South is determined on putting slavery in Kansas. He sees it can't be done, but if the Democratic party insists on the Southern measures it will be in 1860 where the Whigs were in 1856. In all the Northern States it will be routed and cut to pieces. He won't connect himself with the Southern effort. He won't run for President in 1860. He has told Walker, "I shan't be in your way in 1860." For he foresees the defeat of the Democrats at that time; their rally about another platform, under another flag, and with different leaders in 1864. He hopes for his own triumph then — his own election. He contemplated this in 1855-6. Don't you remember "Senator Douglas had a bad sore throat" and could not attend the sessions of the Senate in December, '55, January, '56, but in February got better? I wait now to see what he will say to the administration's treatment of Paulding.

Yours truly, THEO. PARKER.

Anxiously the two men watched the political "dog-fight" between Douglas and Buchanan, hoping for a disruption in the Democratic party, yet distrusting Douglas while unable to forecast his course. The fight was fierce and bitter and even bystanders were not safe, for no one could tell what club Douglas might use. Herndon found time for only a brief reply:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 8, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir: — This letter of yours is longer than usual, and, therefore, to me more satisfactory, though I always feel grateful for any, "long or short." Since I wrote to you this Walker difficulty has happened, and it may alter the circumstances. Douglas is a very curious and exceedingly corrupt man, and no man can tell exactly where he is or will be. Your letter contains some facts and the balance tendencies and philosophy, to which I assent with all my heart. I am obliged to you for your two speeches on "The Great Battle." Please accept my thanks. What I write to you is always written in my office amid bluster, confusion and "malicious queries;" and you must therefore look over imperfections and mistakes. You know a country law office,

and if you do not, just step into ours some day and see for yourself. Though I do not like Douglas, though I despise his character, though I detest the gambling politician, still I, too, say to him, "Seize 'em, bite 'em, choke 'em; it is dog eat dog!" Does it not seem that Douglas, in this Walker matter, is moved purely by spite to Buchanan? Is it not revenge? Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

II

All eyes were turned to the Senate, where the "Little Giant" was fighting for his life, by turns threatened and eulogized in public while his foes within his own party were stabbing him in the back in private. Every kind of pressure was brought to bear upon him to lay down arms. The party press, led by the Washington *Union*, held him up to execration as a traitor, a renegade, and a deserter. With matchless scorn the Richmond *South* spoke of him as a man of rude and vulgar origin, who, by association with Southern gentlemen, had become quite a decent and well-behaved person. The whole machinery of executive patronage was turned against him, and his friends were turned out of office. What this meant in Illinois Herndon described in his next letter — written, it should be remembered, at the very time when John Brown was revealing to Gerritt Smith and to Theodore Parker his desperate plans for attacking slavery by force. Here, at the very ear of Lincoln, was a man, Kentucky bred, like Lincoln himself, and taught to look down on the negro as something below humanity, yet breathing a spirit akin to that of Brown:

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 20, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — When I wrote to you last I was then just going into our Supreme Court, and had no time to answer your letter more at length. Doubtless you remember that I said I agreed to what was in your letter. I did so and do yet, still I see nothing in it to make me alter my opinions concerning Douglas, or his flexible moves. Everything that has happened in Congress and out, since I wrote to you, confirms what I said. I stood upon the law that governs man, and judged all from that standpoint. The filibuster-

ing moves are gone for the present; the Paulding affair is settled, too, for the present. The blood of "the old filibusters," however, is in our people yet, and sooner or later it will break out on the face of the nation, sickening the whole frame and sacrificing the ruddy cheeks of the Anglo-Saxon. Though all this is very true, see where Douglas is: he is whipped; he is evidently cowed; and looks up from his degraded condition with a kind of hell-gathered malignity. Thank God for so much!

President Buchanan is removing the officers in this State: the guillotine works well and fast and sharp. I say, "Cut off their heads — gut them — throw them to the dogs; give them to the crows!" Buck will create a party here, and the fight will be bitter-hot between Buck's men and Douglas's worshipers. I have a poor brother now in Washington *hunting*. While he is going fast one way I am going as fast the other, and so the world moves. If the administration forces the Lecompton constitution on those free people, *I am for war*. I am this day ready to cut out the cause of all our troubles. The more I think of this question and the more I know of Phillips's and your position the more I am convinced that this people will have to meet this issue on the only field you point out. It must come at last; there is no escape from it. It is the law of human progress; your paths are the paths on which this progress is to be made. I am for burning out the cause of the evil — I am for cutting out the nigger, and as I now see it, it is self defense for the white man. Harris, from this district, whom I frequently met on the stump in 1856, takes the same view. He laughed at me at his home, in Petersburg, over my ideas. Now he has caught them. He sees that the cause must be eradicated before the white men are safe. If the Lecompton constitution is forced down our people, the door everywhere will be thrown wide open for Garrison, Phillips, yourself, and others. This will be a Godsend.

I now see that there is no freedom — true, genuine Liberty — anywhere in this broad Union. There is no State Sovereignty in the Confederacy, and the only way to right ourselves is through bloody Revolution. The quicker we get to this point the better for all. This is no flash-in-the-pan idea, but one long struggled against, and loathed, hated and detested. If you know me well you know that this is really my opinion and for which I am ready to sacrifice life, everything but honor. I once scorned men who thought so. Man will develop, and civilization will spread; it is his

destiny written by the finger of God on the spirit-surface of man; and in proportion to our individual development, and the spread of civilization, its result, man must rise, and thus must see and hate the very wrongs which before he worshiped. This is the law: God says to man, "This way my good children — there is no other:" and that way we will go though through glittering steel and crackling fire. But man's destiny shall not perish — no, never.

Your letter is well and inimitably put; there is no evasion of the antecedents or the sequents. Men and parties are as you describe them. The poor miserable Irish are the instruments of our cowardly tyrants. Poor fools. Such men as Everett, Choate, Winthrop are more dangerous to progress — to true Liberty — than the open brawling Irishman. They listlessly sit down when they have the power to do good, and say nothing for the encouragement of mankind. This is practical atheism. They may pretend to worship God, but such a God! Oh, good God! Once I loved all these men, but now I have no words to express my disregard for them.

It may be true that so soon as the Kansas-Lecompton issue is passed, and Kansas is in the Union as a Slave State, that the Southern men will cast their filibustering eyes southward. It is quite likely that this will be so. I "guess" Central America is doomed: then comes Cuba: then more Slave States: and then, — what? Good God! Are these people ever to be waked, fired, educated to the fighting point? That man or set of men who disregards any human being's rights, black or white, will take away all other men's rights when the exigencies *seem* to demand it. This is the law, and this people had better learn that law quickly and well. It does strike me that our people ought to see that the issue is this: "Shall we have no slavery or shall it be universal, including white as well as black?"

You have well said that the two, slavery and freedom, are at the opposite ends of the human poles: that they are undying and eternal antagonists; that they lead ideas, and consequently human actions, up to heaven or down to hell; and that this antagonism is deeply radicated, eternally planted in the natures of the two; if this is so — which no thinking man can deny — then this follows: eternal, bloody, unquailing war. Death to the one or the other is inevitable. I *know* which it will be, but I do not like bloody revolutions. I love peace. My whole nature whispers peace, but at the same time it says, "Peace with justice."

You need not tell me your opinion of the final result of things in America. I know without your telling me. I gather it by instinct — by brute-sagacity. I remember one of your sermons very well in which you say you cannot afford to tell Bostonians the result of things: that they could not bear it.

You ask me if I do not remember that Senator Douglas did not go into the Senate in 1855-6. I do; but at the time had no idea of the cause. Since you have mentioned it and coupled it with other things it is as you state the case — have no doubt of it. The "Senator" was balked; he was disappointed: he is now most emphatically balked — so is the whole Western Democracy. The Douglas men here, and in the north part of the State where I have been, look gloomy, curse strongly — "drink heap whiskey." It does my soul good to see the devils "chaw" the bitter cud. However, they will be *Abolitionists*. Let me ask you a terrible question: "Is not Wendell Phillips's idea about niggers and the Union the only way to cut the knot? Will not this people be compelled to *cut through the Constitution* to reach the nigger, and break his chains so as to keep the white man free?"

My partner, Mr. Lincoln, has just got back from Chicago. He says he saw N. B. Judd, who is quite an astute, subtle politician; he is right from Washington; he says Douglas is dead — feels bad, is gloomy, miserable, knows he is lost. Mr. Judd says that Buchanan is soon, by and through his friends here, to organize a party in Illinois. This is so I think, and if it turns out true the end of Douglas is come; his political grave is dug. I saw a man from "Egypt" — a Douglas Democrat — the other day, and he says that the mass down there refuse to follow Douglas. Excuse length.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

As Herndon had predicted, the Douglas and Buchanan feud had now reached the personal recrimination stage, and all manner of exposures were promised. Ugly rumors were afloat, one to the effect that Douglas himself was not entirely innocent of complicity in the Lecompton fraud, which he so valiantly opposed; while Douglas, in turn, was charging Calhoun with forgery. At any rate, it was evident that revelations of a startling kind would be made if all threats were carried out. Herndon wrote to Mr. Parker correcting two errors in his

former letter, and rejoicing in the prospect of disclosures at the capital:

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 24, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I want to correct an error into which I was led by the telegrams. News did land here that Buchanan was "chopping" off the heads of his enemies, quick and fast. But he has done so to one only, and that was the Chicago postmaster. Again: I stated to you that Mr. Harris had taken a pretty bold stand for freedom; that he stood where I did in 1856. This news did come here, but it is not so; he is only partially with us. His letter to the New York Democratic Anti-Lecompton party is as far as he goes. I know the man; he will eventually be with the North; he is shrewd, not bold; small, technical, not general or great; selfish, not generous. Just as I was writing my letter to you my office got full of people inquiring about three cent lawsuits; they made me make one or two mistakes.

I received a letter, *a reliable one*, from Washington, that Douglas and Calhoun are belching out "secrets" against each other. The letter says that Calhoun will prove by documents, if he is forced to do so, that Mr. Douglas had a finger in making the Lecompton constitution. The same letter says that Douglas, if forced, will prove that Calhoun committed *forgery* in the returns, etc. I hope each will be forced to open. I say, "Apply the screws."

Mr. Douglas — just think — has sent me some documents this morning. That is something I never expected, nor desired. The world does move, I verily believe. You need only write when you feel like doing so. I know your business now better than of old, and excuse you.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Nor was there any real basis in fact for the charge that Douglas was involved in the plot to defraud Kansas of its right to a fair vote. During their joint debates Lincoln, prompted it seems by Trumbull, reviewed the shadowy history of the Toombs Bill, and sought to connect his opponent with its nefarious scheme; but an impartial survey of the incident acquits Douglas, though he damaged himself at the time by his method of defense.[1] Despite these threats of ugly exposure, "the Lit-

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, pp. 303-4, 379-80 (1908).

tle Giant,'' by his fight with Buchanan [1] was rapidly regaining what he had lost in Illinois by his part in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Many, even among the Republicans, who had been deeply estranged from him since 1854, were not unwilling to revise their judgment of a man who fought in behalf of justice to Kansas with so much courage and pluck. Perhaps the Senator was as much surprised as any one else at this quick turn of affairs, but he saw his chance and knew how to use it.

III

From what source none knew, rumors were adrift to the effect that Douglas, having defied the Slave party, might follow the logic of his position. On one issue at least he was already standing with the Republicans, and there were those who hailed his coming over to the party with great joy, notwithstanding the distrust of him by the party leaders in Congress. Though a sinner somewhat late in returning, they conceived that he might still further repent of his sin against the peace and good faith of the nation. Outside of Illinois, the party seemed almost willing to let by-gones be by-gones and to accept Douglas into the ranks as a leader; some going so far as to intimate, as a practical expedient, that the party demand might be softened a trifle, if need be, in order to admit so able, courageous, and influential a convert. Stranger things had happened, and the suggestion gathered momentum and plausibility as it spread.

At last Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune* — perhaps the most widely read paper in the nation — espoused the cause, and called upon Republicans to rally about ''the

[1] For a contemporary critique of ''Mr. Buchanan's Administration,'' see an article of that title by James Russell Lowell in *The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1858, which reviewed the course of the President, stage by stage, including his attitude toward Kansas, his relation to William Walker, Paulding, and the rest; perhaps the most scathing arraignment of a Presidential administration ever written. A more temperate survey is that of James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. I, Chap. X, especially pp. 239-241 (1884).

Little Giant'' in his fight against the common foe. Taking its cue, the party press, especially in the East, began to speak favorably of Douglas and his revolt, in the hope of gaining a distinguished recruit. Even Seward seemed to incline to the same attitude for a time, though he very prudently said nothing publicly; but his supposed organ, the New York *Times*, was outspoken in favor of it. But when Greeley — honest, well-meaning, but ill-advised — actually urged the Republicans of Illinois to put up no candidate in the coming race for the Senate, there were protests. Lincoln and his friends had foreseen it all from the first, except the blunder of Greeley, and their minds were made up. Ten days after the revolt of Douglas, Gustave Koerner had written an article for the *Anzeiger des Westens* of St. Louis, reviewing the situation and summing it up in much the same language that Herndon had used in his letter to Mr. Parker on December 19th. Aptly and incisively he stated the crux of the case:

> It is a very ingenious scheme; but we Illinoisans know Judge Douglas too well to be taken in by it. If he will help us to defeat the regular Democracy, very well; we will not repel him; but to make him the champion of our principles because he happens in some points to agree with us, while on others concerning the slavery question he is against us and still denounces us as Black Republicans, would be the height of self-degradation and imbecility. It would grant him absolution of the terrible sin he has committed against the peace, dignity and morality of the people. Put him in the Senate again, and in less than a year he will have made his peace with the pro-Slavery party, and we shall have been duped. Do not listen to the persuasive advice of outside Republicans who do not know Judge Douglas, but stand to your colors of 1856 and spurn any unholy and compromising alliances.[1]

These men, only a small coterie at first, refused to accept the leadership of Douglas without some inquiry as to his motives. Having for years faced him as the ablest, most alert, most bitter of their foes, they demanded some evidence of repentance more genuine than a desire to return to the Senate without

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 55, 56 (1909).

a fight. They could not agree with philosopher Greeley that not only magnanimity, but policy, dictated that they should tender their support to a man who had said that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or down. Nor did they believe that Douglas had any intention of coming over to the Republican party. "I see his tracks all over our State," wrote Medill, of the Chicago *Tribune*, "and they point only in one direction; not a single toe is turned toward the Republican camp. Watch him, use him, but do not trust him — not an inch."[1] As Greeley afterwards observed, "They did not concur, but received the suggestion with passionate impatience."[2]

But at Washington it was different. By mid-winter politics had made odd things familiar, while "the Little Giant" was still fighting the Lecompton fraud — a fraud so palpable, indeed, that Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, who supported it at every step, afterward declared publicly that it should at once have been kicked out of Congress. On more than one occasion Greeley was a visitor at the Douglas residence in Minnesota Block, and gossip had it that he favored Douglas for the Presidency.[3] One after another men like Henry Wilson, Schuyler Colfax, and other Republican leaders, lost their distrust in an air of engaging good-fellowship;[4] and some of them were ready to indorse "popular sovereignty," now that it seemed likely to exclude slavery from the Territories.[5] Douglas intimated to these men that he could not act with his party in the future,[6] assuring them, repeatedly, that he was in the fight to stay — in his own words, that "he had taken a through

[1] *Life of Schuyler Colfax*, by O. J. Hollister, p. 120 (1886).

[2] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, by Horace Greeley, p. 357 (1869). "And besides," he added, "their hearts were set on the election, as his successor, of their own special favorite and champion, Abraham Lincoln, who . . . was endeared to them by his honest worth as a man."

[3] *First Blows of the Civil War*, by J. S. Pike, p. 403 (1879).

[4] *Life of Colfax*, by O. J. Hollister, pp. 119 ff.; *The Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, by Henry Wilson, Vol. II, p. 567 (1872).

[5] *Life of Seward*, by Frederick Bancroft, Vol. I, pp. 449-50 (1900).

[6] *Life of Schuyler Colfax*, by O. J. Hollister, p. 121 (1886).

ticket, and checked his baggage.''[1] In a letter to Theodore Parker, February 28, 1858, Wilson wrote, quite positive that Douglas was a man to be trusted:

> I say to you in confidence that you are mistaken in regard to Douglas. He is as sure to be with us in the future as Chase, Seward or Sumner. I leave motives to God; but he is to be with us; and he is today of more weight to our cause than any ten men in the country. I know men and I know their power, and I know that Douglas will go for crushing the Slave Power to atoms. To use his own words, to several of our friends, *this day*, in a three-hours consultation: ''We must grind this administration to powder; we must punish every man who supports this crime; and we must *prostrate forever the Slave Power*, which uses Presidents and dishonors and disgraces them.'' He will sink the Democratic party. Don't fear him. Have faith in men; the future is bright with hope.[2]

Truly it was the voice of Esau, but Mr. Parker knew that the hands were the hands of a very slippery and cunning political Jacob.[3] No one now believes that Douglas ever had any intention of going over to the Republican party; but in the new twist of events he did see, as Lincoln said, a chance of attaching the Republicans, or a part of them, to the tail of his Presidential kite. Having breached the Democracy, if he could divide the Republican party he might be able to harness one of its steeds with his Democratic donkey and ride first into the Senate, and then into the White House. There is no doubt that this was his supreme aim in 1858, and one must keep it in

[1] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, by Horace Greeley, p. 356 (1869).

[2] Manuscript letter, by the kindness of Mr. F. B. Sanborn.

[3] While in Illinois, during the campaign of 1856, Mr. Parker had heard Douglas speak at Galesburg, October 21st. Writing to Hon. J. P. Hale, he said: ''I heard Douglas this afternoon. He was considerably drunk and made one of the most sophistical and deceitful speeches I ever heard. It was mere brutality in respect to morals, and sophistry for logic, in the style and manner of a low blackguard. . . But there is a good deal of rough power in his evil face. I never saw him before.'' — *Life of Parker*, by John Weiss, Vol. II, p. 187 (1864). Mr. Weiss suppressed a part of the letter in his facsimile reproduction of it. — *Theodore Parker*, by J. W. Chadwick, p. 331 (1900). Not for this one scene, but after watching the course of Douglas, Parker had lost faith in him.

mind in order to understand that memorable campaign. It was a daring scheme, but not at all impossible, and it would have succeeded had not Lincoln placed his party upon a basis so radical that Douglas dared not follow. So that when the Senator returned in triumph to Chicago, feeling that his fight for Kansas had won the day, he found, to his amazement, that his rival had dictated an issue which placed him upon the defensive.[1]

One has only to read the letters of Lincoln to learn that he had the ambitions of a man; but it is the actual truth to say that in this crisis, though his own political future was involved, personal motives were secondary. Indeed, he had on more than one occasion shown his willingness to stand aside for other men who were true to the right star — for Trumbull in 1854, to go no farther back. But he could not sit still and see the party which had fought the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, had survived the defeat of 1856, and had risen to new life under the staggering blow of the Dred Scott decision, fall into the clutches of a man whom he regarded as a trimmer, a trickster, and a political gambler. He knew that, on the slavery question, Douglas had no deep feeling;[2] that he regarded it as a local instead of a national problem, and really did not

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Clark E. Carr, pp. 78-9 (1909).

[2] That Douglas had no deep feeling with regard to the moral obliquity of slavery hardly needs proof. While, for various reasons, he did not own slaves, as was charged against him, his wife did. (See a letter from Robert M. Douglas, his eldest son, quoted in *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Clark E. Carr, pp. 58-9). When pressed directly upon the subject of the evil of slavery, he invariably dodged. He did not regard the negro as a citizen, declaring over and over again: "This is a white man's government made by white men, for white men and their descendants." He held that the dictum of the Declaration of Independence, that "all men are created equal," had no reference whatsoever to the negro; and, historically, no doubt he was right. In every argument he made he classed negro slaves as he did other property, and once at least he went so far as to say that if he lived in Louisiana he would own slaves and defend his right. — *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, p. 415. Again and again during their joint debates, Lincoln tried to draw from him some expression as to the essential evil of slavery, but to no purpose. The root of the matter was not in him.

care whether it was voted up or down. Small wonder, then, that he was depressed and gloomy when he saw men like Greeley bent on trading the birthright of the party for a mess of pottage.

Herndon, as we have noted, had foreseen the possibility of Douglas coming over to the Republicans, and had contemplated with disgust the idea of having to vote for him; but when it became a probability, linked with the suggestion that the party ideal be lowered, his indignation was only surpassed by his excitement. At once he began writing to Seward, Sumner, Phillips, Greeley, Trumbull, and others, protesting against such a vile apostasy, and urging them not to fall into the trap set by Douglas. The replies, except those of Senator Trumbull, were so unsatisfactory that he determined to go to Washington and New England, and see the situation for himself. Lincoln doubted the propriety of such a journey, which, by virtue of their close relations, might be misconstrued; but Herndon overruled all objections, packed his grip, and started for Washington, dropping a note the while to Mr. Parker.

Springfield, Ill., March 4, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I received from you this morning your speech, in the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, made on January 29th. I thank you for it. I have read it with pleasure, and am instructed by it. You hit Douglas hard, yet do him justice. One mistake you labor under, and it is this: you say that the people of Illinois would vote for him this day. You are mistaken. The cowardly rulers and leaders of the iron-chain Democracy are going over to Buchanan "thick and fast." They are looking for plunder; they are for sale; they scorn Douglas.

I am on my way to Washington — probably start this evening or tomorrow morning — and from which place I will write to you, giving my opinion of things. I want to see Douglas's face: *I want to look him in the eye.* I think I know what he is as well as any man, having seen him enough in all conditions and states.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Though Parker, who was unused to the ways of drinking men, had no idea what Herndon meant by "looking Douglas in the

eye,'' he awaited reports. In Washington Mr. Herndon dined with Senator Trumbull, and went over the situation with him in detail. Trumbull was somewhat puzzled but not alarmed by the course of Douglas, concerning which he deemed it useless to speculate, since in his belief Douglas himself did not know where he was going or where he would come out. He was quite positive, however, that Douglas had no idea of casting his lot with the Republican party. Feeling that Trumbull was not on the inside of the scheme, Mr. Herndon interviewed Seward and Wilson, both of whom had already welcomed Douglas as a powerful ally, on the ground that through him the gospel was being preached, though with adulteration, to the Gentiles.[1] Douglas himself was ill in bed:

> But on receiving my card he directed me to be shown up to his room. We had a pleasant and interesting interview. Of course the conversation soon turned on Lincoln. In answer to an inquiry regarding the latter I remarked that Lincoln was pursuing the even tenor of his way. ''He is not in anybody's way,'' I contended, ''not even in yours, Judge Douglas.'' He was sitting up in a chair smoking a cigar. Between puffs he responded that neither was he in the way of Lincoln or any one else, and did not intend to invite conflict. He conceived that he had achieved what he had set out to do, and hence did not feel that his course need put him in opposition to Mr. Lincoln or his party. ''Give Mr. Lincoln my regards,'' he said, rather warmly, ''when you return, and tell him I have crossed the river and burned my boat.''[2]

There was more to the interview, as we shall see later, which included more than one ''look into the eye of Douglas,'' and Mr. Herndon left firmly convinced that the wolf was after the sheep. Having spent several days in the capital and its environs, he went to New York to have it out with Greeley face to face, and to advise him of the state of sentiment in Illinois. He found that Greeley, while not hostile to Lincoln, was more than ever fixed in his opinion that it was wiser to return Doug-

[1] *Life of Seward*, by T. K. Lothrop, p. 178 (1899).

[2] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 62, 63.

las to the Senate; nor could he be moved.[1] All the same, Herndon presented the case of his partner in the best phase he knew how, and went to see Beecher, who received him cordially and sent a message of good cheer by him to Lincoln. From New York he went to Boston, where he found the sentiment in favor of Douglas even more pronounced. About the time of his arrival Douglas made a speech in the Senate, rising from his bed, it was said, by sheer force of will to enter a final plea for sanity before his party took its suicidal plunge. In closing he said:

> I intend to perform my duty in accordance with my own convictions. Neither the frowns of power nor the influence of patronage will change my action, or drive me from my principles. I stand firmly, immovably upon those great principles of self-government and state sovereignty upon which the campaign was fought and the election won. . . . If, standing firmly by my principles, I shall be driven into private life, it is a fate that has no terrors for me. I prefer private life, preserving my own self-respect and manhood, to abject and servile submission to executive will. . . . I am prepared to retire. Official position has no charms for me when deprived of that freedom of thought and action which becomes a gentleman and a Senator.

With such words ringing in their ears New England men could not understand why Mr. Herndon was not a supporter of Douglas. Those who spoke to him of the situation in Illinois took it for granted that the Republicans were going to rally about "the Little Giant," and send him back to the Senate as a reward for his fight for Kansas. When he mentioned Lincoln, he was several times asked if his partner had not once engaged in a duel[2] — a reference to the absurd incident with Shields sixteen years before. Herndon was indeed astonished that so trivial an incident had lived so long and traveled so far, as if Lincoln had never done anything else. Writing to Lincoln, he reported the trend of things:[3]

[1] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, by Horace Greeley, p. 358 (1869).
[2] *Lincoln, Master of Men*, by A. Rothschild, p. 74 (1906).
[3] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 63, 64.

Revere House, Boston, Mass., March 4, 1858.

Friend Lincoln:

I am in this city of notions, and am well — very well indeed. I wrote you a hasty letter from Washington some days ago, since which time I have been in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and now here. I saw Greeley, and so far as any of our conversation is interesting to you will relate. And we talked, say twenty minutes. He evidently wants Douglas sustained and sent back to the Senate. He did not say so much in so many words, yet his *feelings* are with Douglas. I *know* it from the spirit and drift of his conversation. He talked bitterly — somewhat so — against the papers in Illinois, and said they were fools. I asked him this question, "Greeley, do you want to see a third party organized, or do you want Douglas to ride to power through the North, which he has so much abused and betrayed?" and to which he replied, "Let the future alone; it will all come right. Douglas is a brave man. Forget the past and sustain the *righteous*." Good God, *righteous*, eh!

Since I have landed in Boston I have seen much that was entertaining and interesting. This morning I was introduced to Governor Banks. He and I had a conversation about Republicanism and especially about Douglas. He asked me this question, "You will sustain Douglas in Illinois, won't you?" and to which I said, "*No, never!*" He affected to be much surprised, and so the matter dropped and turned on Republicanism, or in general — Lincoln. Greeley's and other sheets that laud Douglas, Harris, *et al.*, want them sustained, and will *try* to do it. Several persons have asked me the same question which Banks asked, and evidently they get their cue, ideas, or what not from Greeley, Seward, and others. By-the-by, Greeley remarked to me this, "The Republican standard is too high; we want something practical."

This may not be interesting to you, but, however it may be, it is my duty to state what is going on, so that you may head it off — counteract it in some way. I hope it can be done. The Northern men are cold to me — somewhat repellent. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Mr. Herndon thoroughly enjoyed his stay in New England, despite its unfavorable political weather. Nature was at hand to soothe whatever disappointment he felt at the wrong-head-

edness of party leaders, while the city of Boston, with its historic shrines and associations, appealed strongly to his imagination. If some of the men whom he had seen afar dwarfed upon nearer approach, others towered to take their places — notably William Lloyd Garrison, whom he had pictured as a cold, narrow, bigoted, ungracious man, but whom he afterwards regarded as one of the noblest men the nation had known. Nor was he mistaken; for, of all the fathers and fighters of the anti-slavery crusade, for such it was, Garrison was surely one of the most enlightened, one of the most disinterested, one of the most consistent and constant; and, in private life and personal character, one of the most admirable. Garrison afterwards visited Mr. Herndon in Springfield, and their friendship endured, through good and evil days, to the end. Though somewhat chilled by Sumner, the "green Sucker," as he called himself, was warmly received by Phillips and Parker, whose hospitality he enjoyed, and to whom he could talk with equal freedom of politics and religion. To Herndon, as to many another in those days, a Sunday in Music Hall was an experience long anticipated and never to be forgotten. There he saw Theodore Parker on his throne, his vast audience before him, his ample discourse a kind of brilliant scene painting — large, rapid, and vivid, with masses of light and shade, ranging wide and free in its portrayal of the life of God in the soul of man. Herndon was essentially religious, and the prayer touched him more deeply than the sermon, all the more so for that Parker seemed to be out of doors when he prayed; and there was wind, and sun, and gentle rain in his petition, so simple and joyous, and withal so unforgetful of the weary and the heavy-ladened. The audience not less than the service impressed him, and no wonder, for what a galaxy of men gathered about the man of Music Hall!

Returning home, Herndon had many interesting things to tell his partner, in whose behalf he had made the journey, and whose interests he sought to advance; and it was characteristic of him to report, faithfully and fully, all the kind words he had heard about Lincoln from Phillips, Garrison, Beecher, Parker,

and even Greeley. Among a number of books which he brought back with him was a *Life of Edmund Burke* — probably by Sir James Prior, in the Bohn Library, 1854 — which he tried to induce Lincoln to read, but without success. Lincoln dipped into it, but soon tired of the eulogy which he said could not be a true story of any man, since it robbed him of all human faults. He did, however, read some of the lectures and sermons of Parker — Herndon having brought a new supply — in one of which he marked the expression: "Democracy is direct self-government, *over all the people, for all the people, by all the people.*" No doubt this was the origin of that famous phrase which Lincoln, with his sure instinct for the right word, set like a jewel in the imperishable gold of the Gettysburg address.[1]

IV

Two days after his return, Herndon wrote to Mr. Parker giving his impressions of New England and her people, complaining somewhat bitterly of the coldness of Boston men. No one had called on him during the ten days he was in the city, which contrasted strangely with his Southern code of hospitality. Still, it was not of this neglect that he complained, but of the general uncommunicativeness of New England folk, many of

[1] Indeed, there is no doubt that this was the origin, so far as Lincoln was concerned, of that memorable phrase, though some have traced it to Thomas Cooper, and others to the preface of the old Wycliffe Bible. The chance that Lincoln ever saw Cooper's *Information Respecting America*, or the Wycliffe Bible, is infinitesimally small. Parker may have seen both, for his library of 12,000 volumes contained almost a hundred editions of the Bible, some of them very rare. At any rate, the phrase, in one form or another, had been a favorite with Parker for years, often taking the exact form in which Lincoln used it. In a speech delivered in 1859 we find it embedded in a passage of great power, while his first use of it was in a letter to Samuel J. May, in 1846, where it is simply "government of all, by all, for all." But the testimony of Herndon is sufficient as it relates to Lincoln, even if in his biography he is mistaken in the title of the address which he gave to his partner. — *Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. II, p. 65. The address he mentions, "The Effect of Slavery," was delivered on the 4th of July following. See also article by N. B. Judd, *Century Magazine*, September, 1887.

whom seemed to regard his inquisitive Western ways as intrusive. Nevertheless, he was loyal to Boston:

Springfield, Ill., April 7, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I landed at home on the 5th, having improved in body and mind by my trip East. In my travels I was sadly disappointed in individual men, but gloriously disappointed in the grandeur of Nature. Upon approach to individual men they seemed to shrink, whilst Nature grew upon closer acquaintance. I always loved Nature — loved it long and well — and now that childish love has grown and expanded into the reverences of manhood. My ideas of Nature and God have deepened and broadened, have become rich and warm in me, and I feel a fresh, vigorous confidence in the purity of Nature, and the eternal love of God for all his creatures, multiform and multitudinous. I breathe freely and rest easily — a kind of new man.

Though simple individuals have dwarfed upon acquaintance, still I am rejoiced to know that some few are really great and good. Some of these men are not now known, but they will be; and I think I understand them better than I have the credit for, even from them. It was my desire and wish whilst in Boston to form a nearer acquaintance with some few men; but I was somewhat coldly repelled. I do not complain. I shall never utter publicly a lament. Was it not poor Goldsmith who said that "aspiring poverty is wretchedness itself." Was it not he? I say that to know the great, or rather to aspire to, is a weakness and a misery. Any man is an ass who will attempt it, and I put myself down in that category first of all — a proud reigning ass. So much for so much.

My opinion of Massachusetts and her people is rather intensified and greatened. It was always tolerably good, and that opinion is not lessened. To her and her ruling spirits I remain firm. Boston is a great city; it is a world of granite, a city of places and squares. I saw in Boston some of the noblest and handsomest women I ever saw: they will save the race, if the men fail. If there is anything that a poor ignorant "Sucker" like myself can arrogate to himself it is this, namely, an intuitive *seeing* of human character. I watched you all closely, and am not deceived. I say that your men are generally cold — probably not more selfish

than other men; but they are *cold*. Understand me. I do not say this indiscriminately of all. But your women are spontaneously good, generous, and loving. And now I say, God save you all!

By the by, I was greatly disappointed in one man, especially. I had imagined him a shriveled, cold, selfish, haughty man, one who was weak and fanatically blind to the charities and equities of life, at once whining and insulting, mean and miserable; but I was pleasantly disappointed. I found him warm, generous, approachable, communicative: he has some mirth, some wit, and a deep abiding faith in coming universal charity. I was better and more warmly received by him than by any man in Boston; and now whom do you think it was? It was this nation's greatest outlaw: it was William Lloyd Garrison. To my Western friends I can give a good account of Garrison.

As to the combined efforts of mind, which find expression in combinations of power and modifications of forces, toiling in mills and machinery generally, the world must acknowledge Massachusetts master. I had no time to study her thousand branches of the sciences and the arts; and consequently I studied what I saw whilst I ran. I almost reflected while I slept: it was all new to me, and exceedingly interesting to one who is so "green." I say this with the same candor that I have talked about men and things in this letter. I know my faults, positive and negative. I was not reared in cities or in costly halls, and am not up to the civilities, or rather the forms of civilities. I blunder here and err there, and all I can say is, "Forgive my trippings." How can a poor Western devil help being surprised and overwhelmed amid a confusion of men and things.

Now as to you personally: I heard your sermon on Sunday two weeks since, and was at once highly pleased and gratified. The sermon was deep, rich, broad, and generous, giving all their due. It was bottomed upon a grand social, political, and religious philosophy—the best experiences and reflections in the Kantian sense. I do not say this *because it is you*; I say it because it is true, and I think I understand the elements of the Beautiful, the Good, and the True; at least I feel them, if I cannot logically comprehend them. I was gratified at the immensity of your audience; was surprised at the number of men and women who came to hear you — to learn and grow wiser and better through you. Technical theology is odious and it can never comprehend,

much less invade the threshold of Music Hall. There let Humanity, Duty, Charity, God reign forever supreme!

My whole trip was one of delight, amusement, pleasure and profit, bating a little for disappointments and rebuffs. In Illinois our vegetation is much in advance of Massachusetts. Our gooseberry bushes are out in full leaf; our lilac is out, and blooming; our tulips are up, and the flower stem is two or three inches high; our people are planting their crops; Nature everywhere looks kindly, fresh, and green, inviting its lovers to "promenade all," and dance a universal waltz. Give my best respects to Mrs. Parker, and to Garrison. Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

If Lincoln could not read the *Life of Edmund Burke*, he did read, attentively, another book which Mr. Herndon secured while in Washington — a book notable in its day, alike for its defects and its facts, *The Impending Crisis of the South and How to Meet It*, by Hinton Rowan Helper, of North Carolina. This book, a passionate appeal to the non-slave-holding people of the South to rise up and rid themselves of the curse, had been indorsed by John Sherman, and other Republican leaders, and had precipitated a bitter contest for Speaker of the House a few weeks before. The book appeared in the latter part of 1857 and it stirred deeply the popular mind, especially in the North where its facts and its spirit were equally astonishing, while Southern men denounced it as "insurrectionary and hostile to the tranquility of the country." Its chief contention, that the great inferiority of the South in wealth, education, population, and production was due to slavery, was supported by statistics. It showed, on the basis of the census of 1850, that in a population of 6,184,477 in the Slave States, only 347,525 were slave-holders, and yet that small minority dominated the South, dictated its politics, and in their own interest were ready to dissolve the Union. Therefore its appeal, almost hysterical at times, to the vast, apathetic, cowardly majority to bestir themselves and throw off the curse, by force if need be.[1] Unfortunately the author was not content with proving

[1] Originally there was as strong an anti-slavery sentiment in Virginia and Maryland as in New York and Rhode Island, nearly all great Southern men, from Jefferson to R. E. Lee, being opposed to slavery. The mistaken

his thesis, or with showing that the non-slave-holders, who were a great majority, were the victims of gross and deliberate injustice. His hot pen ran away with him into language so passionate and revengeful as to invite ignorant men to begin a class war at once.

Yet there was a logic in his facts which none could deny, albeit vitiated in many thoughtful minds by his frenzy for a sudden and revolutionary change. Still, men like Greeley, Sherman, William Cullen Bryant, and Weed overlooked these excesses in view of the array of facts, in the hope that the book would help such efforts as Cassius M. Clay, of Kentucky, and B. G. Brown and F. P. Blair, Jr., of Missouri, were making to create an anti-slavery party on slave soil. Long before, this had been advocated, theoretically, by Henry Clay and others, but now it seemed to be a possible, if not a probable, move. This, they held, would relieve the Republicans of the charge of sectionalism, while it would lessen the dangers of disunion.

The copy of this book owned by Lincoln and Herndon — the first edition — is now before me, and their markings are characteristic of the two men. Lincoln, while noting the significant facts, marked for disapproval those passages pleading for violence,[1] some of which Herndon underscored as John

belief that slave labor was cheap labor; that cotton could be best cultivated, along with sugar and rice, by the negro — notably disseminated by the cotton gin — sectionalized and commercialized slavery, and made it aggressive. But there were Southern Abolitionists from the first, from John L. Wilson, of Sumter County, South Carolina, down; and when the slave conspiracy became militant and aggressive there was a constant stream of Southern people flowing North — such as the Rutledges whom Lincoln knew at New Salem — to get away from it. Some day the history of Southern anti-slavery sentiment will be written, and it will be a startling revelation.

[1] For example: "Of you, the introducers, aiders, and abettors of slavery, we demand indemnification for the damage our lands have sustained on account thereof. The amount of the damage is $7,544,148,825; and now, Sirs, we are ready to receive the money. We must have a settlement" (p. 126). "Do you aspire to become the victims of white non-slave-holding vengeance by day and of barbarous massacre by negroes at night?" (p. 128). "Out of our effects you have long since overpaid yourselves for your slaves; and now, Sirs, you *must* emancipate them, or

Brown might have done, the latter erasing a few of his more radical markings. Both men knew that the Abolition leaders of the North, from Lundy the Quaker, to Brown of Ossawatomie, had their unknown sympathizers in the South, though the latter were struggling in vain against a tyranny even more terrible than that which fettered the negro. Southern men saw in *The Impending Crisis* a premonition of an attack upon slavery in the States where it existed, and they were not far from right. Lincoln questioned the wisdom of its gratuitous circulation in 1859 for the same reason.

Later in the month we find Herndon writing to Parker, expressing his approval of two sermons on religious revivals, and reporting the dickerings of Douglas for Republican support in Illinois. Such propositions to trade served only to confirm his suspicions and to redouble his vigilance:

Springfield, Ill., April 17, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Friend: — This moment I received your two sermons on the revivals which madded the people. Revivals are spasmodic; they are not guided by reason or philosophy; they die out, leaving the soul in darkness. Or they finally prepare the soul for a true, God-revival guided by reason and philosophy. I have seen too much and too many of these revivals to fear them, or scarcely respect them. I love and reverence religion with my whole soul; it is as deep in me as my being; but spasmodic feeling is not religion. It is undeveloped feeling, and I respect its source. The first sermon is quite appropriate in historical allusion, and the second sweeps principles generously and broadly; they are both excellent.

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we will emancipate them for you'' (p. 129). ''Small-pox is a nuisance; strychnine is a nuisance; mad dogs are a nuisance; slavery is a nuisance; slave-holders are a nuisance, and so are the slave-breeders. We propose therefore, with the exception of strychnine, which is the least of all these nuisances, to exterminate the catalog from beginning to end'' (p. 139). ''Indeed, it is our honest conviction that all the pro-slavery slave-holders, who are alone responsible for the continuance of this baneful institution among us, deserve to be at once reduced to a parallel with the basest criminals that lie fettered in the cells of public prisons'' (p. 158). And more of the same sort.

Friend, I am indebted to you very much — more than I have ever told you, concerning this subject. Your guidance holds me steady, calm, and I look up to God with hope, faith philosophized, knowing that what He has made he has made out "of a perfect material, for a perfect purpose, and for a perfect end," and whose eternal life and laws will lead thereto. There may be some special thing that you and I may differ about, but that makes no difference. Never mind my poor letters, as they are always written in a hurry — kind of Quakerish.

Our politics are getting warm, and Douglas sends out feelers to us to trade, but as yet our men stand firm. Propositions have abundantly been made, and which I have heard read. They do not purport to come from Douglas, but you know. You understand, don't you? So soon as I get a moment's time I will answer yours more fully, stating some other things — that is, what I saw in jail at Alexandria, Virginia, etc. Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

On April 21st the Democratic State Convention was held in Springfield, and Mr. Herndon was a spectator of its proceedings. It affirmed that by sound party doctrine the Lecompton constitution ought to be "submitted to the direct vote of the actual inhabitants of Kansas at a fair election."[1] But when resolutions were introduced approving the course of Senator Douglas, there was a bolt. The bolters, mostly from Chicago and the northern part of the State — many of them Buchanan appointees — held a " rump " assembly in another room, and called a convention to meet in Springfield on June 9th. This closed the door to any reconciliation between the Douglas and Buchanan factions; there was to be war to the hilt. Mr. Herndon wrote:

In Court, Springfield, Ill., April 27, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — This moment I received the *Atlantic Monthly*, and I am tired of the Law. Before me, and just between me and the Judge, stands a counsellor who is twisting up his mind into knots attempting to show the substantial and essential difference between a traverso whose specific qualities are a certainty to a certain extent in every particular, and one whose properties only require certainty to a common

[1] *Life of Douglas*, by J. W. Sheahan, p. 394 (1860).

extent in every particular. How he will succeed only "tweedle dee and tweedle dum" can tell. This barbarism to me is utterly disgusting.

I picked up the *Atlantic*, and my eye shot to Henry Ward Beecher the very first thing, and there I saw my friend Parker[1] as large as life and as witty and philosophic as ever. I shook hands with him, for there he stood, as good-natured and as kind as ever. I see you often in the pulpit and on the platform, but not often in the reviews. I think your criticism very just and very good. I have heard, seen, and studied Beecher. His mind is wholly objective, but quick in instincts of human feeling. He is strong in sentiment. He is a man of great energy and endurance; he is sagacious but not philosophic. I have not read the book, but my wife has. I have no time now.

We had a great double-headed Democratic meeting here — one Buchanan and the other Douglas; they are deeply inimical, malicious, and withering in their mutual curses. Oh! what a sight! Plunderers of the people now at bloody war with each other over the spoils. The Douglas convention was scary, timid and frightened; it acted cowardly. Buchanan's was brave, manly, courageous in its hell-deep iniquity; it was Lucifer-like in act and deed, and we in Illinois anticipate a terrible struggle. Do not forget that it is to be war to the knife. No quarters are to be asked or given; and this the Republicans have unanimously and considerately pondered and agreed to. So look out for squalls.

I have a letter this day from Friend Greeley; his talk about Douglas is policy. He explains and tells us to stand to our own men and principles, and to run them, and none other — wants Buchanan men beaten more than Douglas men. This is private. Our boys here did not like Greeley's course, but all is O. K. now.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Douglas, it seems, had wavered[2] when the administration, in its infamous "English Bill," had offered him an opportunity to close the rift and unite the party. Pugh of Ohio, who had stood with him hitherto, had retreated across the improvised

[1] The reference is to an article by Mr. Parker reviewing a recent book, *Life Thoughts from the Discourses of Henry Ward Beecher*, by a member of his congregation.

[2] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, pp. 343-345 (1908).

bridge, and Douglas hesitated what to do. He knew that the people of Kansas would vote down the land bribe, but he feared that he could not convince his constituency in Illinois that it was not treacherous to yield. Hence the attitude of Greeley in his letter to Mr. Herndon; but when Douglas decided to stand firm Greeley renewed his advice to the Illinois Republicans. Herndon wrote to Parker:

Springfield, Ill., May 29, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—Yours of the 13th is before me and in answer to which let me say: I would have been highly pleased to have met at your house a few friends, but as it was I did not. My object in visiting Boston was education, and the purposes to which that education was to be specially applied was — Liberty speeches. I expect to be a Republican elector in 1860. I wanted to see the places of Revolutionary memory, and the three living institutions of Boston — Garrison, Parker, and Phillips. So that when I wanted to speak of things I could talk knowingly; and when such men as you were thrown in the way of the Republican march, for base purposes, and by mean men for infamous ends, I wanted to say to the vile slanderers, "You lie!" It is all right. I do not complain, though I must say that I was somewhat disappointed. Do you suppose that this will alter my respect for you? God forbid! You know me to little purpose if you think I am so small as that. Here is my hand and my heart. Let this matter drop from your fingers into the ocean.

We are to have a Republican convention here, in this city, on June 16th. The Buchanan convention comes off here on June 7th. We expect to have fun at the latter. Douglas, it is said, is to be crushed by the Administration: it does not look that way, if we are to judge from what has lately happened in Congress. Friend Greeley seems determined that this shall not be, if he can help it, though he sacrified the Republicans in Illinois. Politicians will use other people's paws to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. Greeley injures us in Illinois while he is trying to sustain Douglas. I have made two political speeches since I saw you — one in this city and one at Petersburg — took high grounds for Freedom. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

On the following day Mr. Herndon received a letter from Greeley, in reply to a stinging protest against the interference of the latter in Illinois politics. If the Republicans will not support Douglas for the Senate, he hopes they will stand by Harris for the House. The letter reads:

New York, May 29, 1858.

Friend Herndon:

I have yours of the 7th. I have not proposed to instruct the Republicans of Illinois in their political duties, and I doubt very much that even so much as is implied in your letter can be fairly deduced from anything I have written.

Let me make one prediction. If you run a candidate against Harris and he is able to canvass, *he will beat you badly*. He is more of a man, at heart and morally, than Douglas, and has gone into the fight with more earnestness and less calculation. Of the whole Douglas party, he is the truest and best. I never have spoken a dozen words with him in my life, having met him but once; but if I lived in his district I should vote for him. As I have never spoken of him in my paper, and suppose I never shall, I take the liberty to say this much to you. Now paddle your own dug-out. Yours, HORACE GREELEY.

If he had actually left the Illinois Republicans to paddle their own canoe, the result might have been different in the autumn, but he kept on tossing logs into the stream. By this time it had been determined that Lincoln was to make the race for the Senate, and, in the picturesque Illinois phrase, "set the prairies afire" against Douglas. Herndon wrote to Mr. Parker describing the situation:

Springfield, Ill., June 1, 1858.

Friend Parker:

I want to talk politics with you a moment, leaving all other things "way behind." Do you remember, when I was in Boston, I told you that Douglas said, "Do not put any confidence in what Greeley says about his information in relation to the non-passage of the Lecompton constitution?" Has not Douglas proved a prophet once in his villainous life? He told me at the same time that he and the Republicans would work together, soon, on some moves — that is, Cuba and Central Mexican affairs; and now as his

word was good in one particular, let us put a little confidence in " Hell's dread prophet " on this assertion of his about Cuba and Mexico. This is a great world, is it not, my friend?

We, the Republicans, out here are comparing hands, seeing how we feel and stand, so that we may go into the " great battle " of 1858-9 in Illinois, between *Slavery and Freedom, Douglas and Lincoln, Democracy and Republicanism.* It will be a life and death fight, so far as Democracy is concerned. If she goes gurgling down beneath the red waves of slaughter, she is gone forever. Not so with Republicanism; she is young, vital and energetic, and so can survive defeat — yea, frown on it; it will stiffen her backbone, harden her pulpy frame. *I will do all I can to hold the leader's hands up!* Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

So matters stood on the eve of the great debates, in which Shiloh was fought at Ottawa and Gettysburg at Freeport. Had Lincoln been a guileless Parsifal in politics, as so many have portrayed him, he could not have saved his party in that critical hour when the voices of expediency, and the advice of friends, pleaded for a lowering of the ideal. Still less could he have met the astute, artful, masterful Douglas, whose resourcefulness was only surpassed by his unctuous and persuasive sophistry. If personal ambition played its part with Lincoln, as it has with all men great and small, far more potent was the ambition to serve the truth as God gave him to see it. Nor did any man ever have a truer partner, a more faithful friend, or a more tireless fellow-worker than Herndon.

CHAPTER VI

The Great Debates

So much has been written of the Lincoln and Douglas debates that the details of the contest are, for the most part, familiar to all.[1] It was indeed a memorable campaign, alike for the importance of the issues involved and for the genius and skill of the debaters — though to the nation at large, as compared with his opponent, Lincoln seemed, in 1858, to emerge suddenly and unexpectedly from a profound obscurity. His later fame has irradiated every detail of his early career; but it was the position of Senator Douglas in national affairs, his revolt from his party, his obvious ambition for the highest honors, together with his power as a debater, that really enchained the attention of the nation. One must needs keep this in mind, so completely has the perspective of time reversed the aspects of the scene.

Scarcely less interesting than the debates themselves were the preliminary meetings, the manœuvering of forces, and the

[1] Perhaps the best individual account of the campaign is the chapter contributed by Mr. Horace White to the second edition of the Herndon and Weik biography of Lincoln, in 1892 (Vol. II, Chap. IV). Mr. White was employed as correspondent for the Chicago *Tribune*, then called the *Press and Tribune*, and wrote from notes made when he was following the debaters. But for comprehensiveness and vividness of detail, for careful comparison of the texts of the speeches, not less than for newspaper excerpts reproducing the human color and partisan rancor of the contest, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, edited by E. E. Sparks, and published under the auspices of the Illinois Historical Society, is by far the best portrayal of the campaign. (*Collections of the State Historical Library of Illinois*, Vol. III, *Lincoln Series*, Vol. I, 1908.) The speeches are given with all the interruptions, also the songs and slogans of the day, together with editorial fulminations, descriptions by correspondents, local scenes, and the press comment throughout the country — all with admirable discrimination and impartiality.

marshaling of ideas. The Democratic convention, which met in April, was a poltroon assembly, as Herndon described it in his letter to Parker. Though largely attended and very enthusiastic in its speeches, it was lamentably weak in its resolutions, endorsing the course of Douglas, indeed, but expressing not the slightest disapproval of the Buchanan régime. A motion to record regret at the course of the Administration in removing the friends of Douglas from office in the State, was promptly tabled. This was doubtless on the advice of Douglas himself, who wished to avoid open rupture, while leaving the door ajar for a possible reconciliation. Only two offices were at stake — State Treasurer and the Superintendency of Public Instruction — and W. B. Fondy and former Governor French were named for those posts. After which the convention adjourned in a mood of contempt for the bolters, mingled with fear lest the contagion spread.

Of the "rump" convention of Buchanan henchmen in Springfield on June 9th, little need be said. It was a miserable farce, representing only forty-eight of the one hundred counties in the State, and, as the Chicago *Times* added, "Considering that the delegates were self-appointed, and that offices under the federal government were promised to all who would attend, the fact that in fifty-two counties there could not be found men mean enough to participate in the proceedings," was a tribute to Illinois. Dougherty and Reynolds were named for the offices, and resolutions were adopted denouncing Douglas and characterizing his fight against Buchanan as "an act of overweening conceit." John C. Breckenridge and Daniel S. Dickinson had been announced as speakers, but neither of them appeared. But a telegram was read from Dickinson, sending "a thousand greetings," and this, as the Douglas men said, was surely liberal enough, being about ten to each delegate. Aside from its disclosure of disgustingly dirty methods in politics, including lying, bribery, and underhanded skunkishness, this movement cut very little figure in the campaign.

I

As the date of the Republican convention approached, Lincoln became solitary and even sad. Knowing that he was to be named as the standard-bearer of his party, and knowing that it was a time of crisis both for himself and his cause, he was much alone with his thoughts, pondering what to do. Herndon knew the moods of his partner — his profound abstraction, his fits of silence and gloom — and he respected them to the utmost. When he saw that long, gaunt figure sitting for hours in the corner of the office, his chair tilted against the wall, his hands clasped about his knees, his head bowed, apparently unconscious of all that was going on, he did not intrude. This time, however, abstraction and melancholy seemed to be blended, and the younger man watched the outcome with solicitude.

Slowly and sadly the thinker reviewed in his mind the history of slavery aggression, beginning with the effort made to denounce the King of Great Britain for establishing slavery in the colonies, which the fathers sought to include in the list of grievances in the Declaration of Independence. Even then there were protests from the South, and that paragraph had to be stricken out. That was the first concession to the Slave Power. Multitudes of concessions had followed through the years, each one granting some special privilege to the Slave States, which had only served to whet their appetites for more. Gradually the feeling that slavery was an evil to be tolerated had given way, for economic reasons, to the feeling that it was a necessary institution to be fostered. All down the years it had rested like a pall upon the republic — present at all disagreements, making a fear and a reservation in all public gatherings, holding the best emotions and the widest patriotism in thrall. At last it had become boldly, insolently, defiantly aggressive, brandishing a threat of disunion whenever its advance was impeded.

With the renewal of the agitation in 1854, almost every variety of opinion had come to exist among the people respecting slavery and the future of the Union; for all divined that

the two were vitally related. Some were for freedom, immediate and universal, regardless of the Union, and some in the same way were for slavery. Others were for the Union, regardless of slavery or freedom; while still others foresaw a Union in which universal freedom, if not a present blessing, would be, at least, an assured, albeit distant, hope and prophecy. This last class, to which Lincoln belonged, held that by restricting the cause of discord the Union might be steered safely between abolitionism and perpetual slavery, to its proper destiny. But the signs of such a destiny were not propitious. By the terms of the Dred Scott decision all barriers had been thrown down, all restraint removed, and it needed but one further decision to make it unlawful for any State to exclude slavery. Whatever others thought, for Lincoln the hour had come to challenge this advance of slavery; and he felt himself to be the man for the hour.

Having thought the problem through from end to end, he began to write, following his curious custom of jotting down notes on bits of paper and depositing them in his hat. He was never a ready writer, like Herndon, least of all on an occasion such as this, when each word had to be carefully weighed in the balances of truth and propriety. Mr. Herndon divined what he was doing, but did not ask any question or make any suggestion. It was his speech accepting the nomination for the Senate; and when he began to transcribe it in orderly form he became more cheerful, but not more communicative. When he had finished the final draft of the speech, he locked the door of the office, drew the curtain across the glass panel in the door, and read it to Herndon, pausing at the end of each paragraph to await comment. Together they discussed the speech, sentence by sentence, though only the first paragraph, including the figure of the house divided against itself, caused any question. Often he had used it in office conversation, but never before in public, except at Bloomington in 1856, when Judge T. Lyle Dickey pronounced it a "d—— fool utterance." Remembering that incident, Mr. Herndon remarked:

"It is true, but is it wise or politic to say so?" To which Lincoln replied:[1]

> That expression is a truth of all human experience, "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The proposition is also true, and has been true for six thousand years. I want to use some universally known figure expressed in simple language as universally well known, that may strike home to the minds of men in order to raise them up to the peril of the times. I do not believe I would be right in changing or omitting it. I would rather be defeated with this expression in the speech, and uphold and discuss it before the people, than be victorious without it."

Against such a spirit, with its disregard of personal consequences, Herndon had no heart to protest, though he felt like doing so, for he was naturally anxious for Lincoln to win. Here was true leadership, lifting still higher the very ideal which the party leaders in the East were even then seeking to lower. Although his mind was firmly made up, Lincoln called a caucus of his friends in the library of the State House and read the speech to them, as he had read it to Herndon. One by one they pronounced it too radical, predicting that it meant defeat in that it gave Douglas just the opportunity he coveted, while at the same time it would alienate many Anti-Lecompton Democrats. They pointed out that the situation was different from what it was in 1854, for though he had missed the victory itself at that time, the fruits of the victory had accrued to the cause in the election of Trumbull; whereas now both the victory and its fruits would be lost to Douglas, whom they were so eager to defeat. Not one endorsed the wisdom of making the speech except Herndon, who, after listening to these protests, exclaimed: "Lincoln, deliver that speech as read, and it will make you President!" So he reports himself foretelling, though the prophecy is weakened somewhat by the fact that it was recorded some years after the marvelous fulfilment. But there is no doubt that Herndon strongly backed his partner in this move, as in all others of like kind; for it was his mission to embody the ever-present moral protest against slav-

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 67.

ery, and he did not fail to keep this side of the question alive in the soul of his friend.[1]

But none of these things moved Lincoln. After listening to his friends, he rose from his chair and made a brief talk in which, after alluding to the thought and care with which he had prepared the speech, he replied to all objections by saying that the time had come when those sentiments should be uttered, and added: "If it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to the truth — let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right." Dr. William Jayne, who was present at this conference, gives a fuller report of the remarks of Lincoln, adding to other versions the following, which has every mark of authenticity:

> I regret that my friend Herndon is the only man among you who coincides with my views and purposes of the propriety of making this speech; but I have determined in my own mind to make this speech, and in arriving at this determination I cheerfully admit to you that I am moved to this purpose by the noble sentiments expressed in those beautiful lines of William Cullen Bryant in his poem on "The Battlefield." (He then quoted six verses, emphasizing this one:
>
> Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
> The foul and hissing bolt of scorn;
> For with thy side shall dwell at last
> *The victory of endurance born.*)

Continuing, he said: I am aware that many of our friends, and all of our political enemies, will say like Scipio I am "carrying the war into Africa;" but that is an incident of politics which none of us can help, but it is an incident which in the long run will be forgotten and ignored. We believe that every human being, whatever may be his color, is born free, and that every human soul has an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Apostle Paul said, "The just shall live by faith." This doctrine, laid down by St. Paul, was taken up by the greatest reformer of the Christian era, Martin Luther, and was adhered to with a vigor and fidelity never surpassed until it won a supreme victory, the benefits and advantages of which we are enjoying today.

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by D. J. Snider, p. 405 (1908).

> I lay down these propositions in the speech I propose to make and risk the chance of winning a seat in the United States Senate because I believe the propositions are true, and that ultimately we shall live to see, as Bryant says, "The victory of endurance born." [1]

On June 16th, the Republican State convention assembled in Springfield, and it was an enthusiastic body. Nearly six hundred delegates were present, and they, with their alternates, completed a round thousand of earnest men, gathered from all parts of the State.[2] Aside from the Senatorial question, there was but little interest in the proceedings. Gustave Koerner was made chairman by unanimous vote—a reward, as he frankly confessed, for having written the article dissecting Douglas for the *Anzeiger des Westens* six months before.[3] James Miller and Newton Bateman were named for the two offices to be filled, emphatic approval was given to the course of Senator Trumbull, and a series of resolutions was adopted as a platform. As only the members of the Legislature were to be elected, the convention was ready to adjourn, but a thrilling incident delayed it. Delegates from Cook County appeared with a banner upon which was inscribed, "Cook County for Abram Lincoln for United States Senator!" Evidently this had been carefully planned and well timed, for Norman Judd, in a very happy address, referred to the significance of this banner. Whereupon a delegate from Peoria arose, and, waving a flag on which was printed the word "Illinois," moved that it be nailed over "Cook County," making the banner read, "Illinois for Abraham Lincoln!" And it was so done, amidst cheers three times three and three extra, after which a resolution was adopted declaring:

> *That Abraham Lincoln is our first and only choice for United States Senator to fill the vacancy about to be created by the retirement of Stephen A. Douglas.*[4]

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[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Wm. Jayne, pp. 42-3 (1908).

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, p. 159 (1866).

[3] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 56-7 (1909).

[4] Just when Lincoln began to dream of the Presidency is not definitely known; but almost certainly not until after his debates with Douglas.

This direct nomination of Lincoln was unusual, as if the election of a Senator were to be decided by popular vote; but many things lay behind it. That all present were embarrassed by persistent hints of a coalition with Douglas, there is no question. It was not according to the wish of many of the delegates to make such a formal nomination, yet, as Douglas had intimated that it was the intention to use the name of Lincoln in the canvass, and to adopt another name in the Legislature, all precedents were cast aside.[1] Hence this ringing resolution, with its emphasis upon "*our first and only choice,*" which not only hushed the busy rumors of fusion, but put the political life of Douglas in jeopardy from that hour. Thenceforth not only the issues, but the personalities of the campaign stood out clearly defined, and this added zest to the contest. Still, as we shall see, Douglas, while dealing in denunciation on the stump, continued to dicker with Republican leaders outside the State to the end.

In the evening the hall of the State House was packed to excess awaiting the speech of Lincoln, which inspired more of fear among his friends than among his foes. Today those solemn opening words rise up before us and march with the foot-fall of destiny, and even to the men who heard them, on that summer evening, they seemed heavy with awful prophecies. If radicalism means rootedness, then Lincoln went as straight as a line of light to the root of the national discord, while at the same time he saved his party from apostasy and ruin. Slowly and impressively he read his speech, beginning after the manner of Webster in his reply to Hayne, which had served him as a model:

> If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year, since a policy was

During this convention a poll of the delegates was taken to ascertain their preference for President, and the name of Lincoln was not in the list of favorites, though Trumbull received a number of votes. Seward led, and other names mentioned were Fremont, McLean, Chase, and Bissell.

[1] *Life of Lincoln,* by J. G. Holland, p. 160 (1866).

> initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new — North as well as South.[1]

From one point of view this paragraph was a tactical blunder, but time proved that his straightforwardness was, after all, the best strategy. Indeed, the speech was more remarkable for its conservatism than for its radicalism, since it did not demand the abolition of slavery, but only a restriction of the evil within the original limit assigned to it, in the hope that it would finally disappear. Of course he did not foresee how Douglas would so twist his words as to make it appear that he was foisting the alternatives of a divided Union or a uniformity of custom; "all one thing or all the other." Neither idea had been in his mind, nor did he set any date when slavery would at last cease to be. All else was left out of mind in his attempt to focus attention upon the *spread* of slavery as the cause of discord, and a threat of disunion.

[1] Of course this idea was not new. Beecher, Parker, and others had used similar expressions at various times in the North. Four months later Mr. Seward, in his famous Rochester speech, October 25, summed up the situation as "an irrepressible conflict," and his phrase became a slogan, while the New York *Herald* denounced him as "an arch agitator of a bloody program." — *Life of Seward*, by Frederick Bancroft, Vol. I, pp. 461-3 (1900). Even the Richmond *Enquirer*, which Lincoln read regularly, had said something of the kind as early as 1856 (*Constitutional History*, by Von Holst, Vol. VI, p. 299), and Wade had told the Senate that "Slavery must now become general, or it must cease to be at all." — *Abraham Lincoln*, by J. T. Morse, Vol. I, p. 119 (1896).

Reviewing recent history, he defined "squatter sovereignty" as a doctrine which said that "If any one man choose to enslave another no third man shall be allowed to object." All that Douglas demanded, as the vital issue of his campaign, was that Kansas should have a fair vote on the Lecompton constitution. But, as Lincoln showed, the issue upon the Lecompton constitution was one of *fact*, whose solution one way or the other left unsettled the real question whether slavery should be restricted or whether it should be left free to extend itself. Nor was Douglas the man to settle this question, for he had declared in the Senate that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or down. Putting recent events together, Lincoln charged the Democracy with a conspiracy to make slavery universally lawful. This conspiracy began with the repeal of the Missouri Compact, and had been consummated, so far as the Territories were concerned, by the Dred Scott[1] decision, which declared the extension of slavery to be an indispensable condition of the maintenance of the Union. Only one thing was needed to complete the intrigue, and that was a decision affirming the same to be true of the States. Nor did he hesitate to predict that such a decision would be forthcoming, unless the present dynasty were overthrown.

All through his speech, it was plain that Lincoln feared the influence of Greeley hardly less than the devices of Douglas. Nor was this fear without a basis, for the New York *Tribune* was read all over Illinois, especially in the northern and central parts — many farmers, it was said, waiting until the paper

[1] The convention which nominated Lincoln had expressed "condemnation of the principles and tendencies of the extra-judicial opinions of the majority of the judges," as putting forth a "political heresy." — *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, p. 159 (1866). Before that S. P. Chase had said that, if the courts would not overthrow the pro-slavery construction of the Constitution, the people would do so, even if it should "be necessary to overthrow the courts." — *Life of Chase*, by R. B. Warden, p. 313 (1874). Many anti-slavery men never did forgive Judge Taney for his decision in the Dred Scott case. When he died, in 1864, Sumner made protest on the floor of the Senate against paying him the usual honors accorded to a member of the Supreme Court.— *Twenty Years of Congress*, by J. G. Blaine, Vol. I, pp. 135-6 (1884).

came to know their political opinions. Despite the repeated protests of Herndon and others, Greeley persisted in lauding Douglas for his fight against Buchanan, intimating that he might be the pilot, raised up by fate, to steer the ship of state safely between the Scylla of abolitionism and the Charybdis of perpetual slavery. Hence the closing remarks of Lincoln:

> There are those who denounce us openly to their own friends, yet whisper to us softly, that Senator Douglas is the aptest instrument there is to effect that object. They wish us to *infer* all, from the fact that he now has a little quarrel with the present head of the dynasty; and that he has regularly voted with us on a single point, upon which he and we have never differed. They remind us that he is a great man, and that the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. But "a living dog is better than a dead lion." Judge Douglas, if not a dead lion for this work, is at least a caged and toothless one. How can he oppose the advances of slavery? He doesn't care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the "public heart" to *care nothing about it*. . . . For years he has labored to prove it a sacred right of white men to take negro slaves into the new Territories. . . . Senator Douglas holds, we know, that a man may rightfully be wiser to-day than he was yesterday — that he may rightfully change when he finds himself wrong. But can we, for that reason, run ahead, and infer that he will make any particular change, of which he, himself, has given no intimation? . . . Now, as ever, I wish not to misrepresent Judge Douglas's position, question his motives, or do aught that can be personally offensive to him. Whenever, if ever, he and we can come together on principle, so that our cause may have assistance from his great ability, I hope to have interposed no adventitious obstacle. But clearly, he is not with us — he does not pretend to be — he does not promise ever to be. Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends — those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work — who *do care* for the result. . . . If we stand firm, *we shall not fail*. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.

But, judging from the feeling among the delegates following this speech, the victory on such a platform was sure to be

late in coming. Leonard Swett and others boldly predicted defeat from the outset, while Judge Dickey was chagrined that Lincoln, on so important an occasion, had "worked in that d—— fool utterance." Even so stalwart and noble a man as E. B. Washburne, who had thought it unwise to nominate Lincoln [1] — still clinging to the belief that Douglas was at heart an anti-slavery man, and one to be trusted — held that the speech was fatal. Many were of this opinion all through the campaign, and in Springfield it made Lincoln quite unpopular, though it must be said that he had not been a favorite in his own city since 1856. But now, however, there were new cold shoulders turned toward him, including some of those who were afterwards so proud to speak of him as " our relative," which he was by marriage.[2]

Nothing daunted, Lincoln and Herndon set about preparing for the campaign. Each made for himself a little pocket scrap-book, in which they pasted such clippings from the papers as they wished to use, and noted down dates, facts, and other items of value. One has only to go through these little books, both of which are owned by Jesse W. Weik, to see how carefully they armed themselves with data, how closely they had studied the speeches of Douglas, and how alert they were in making "the little dodger" undo himself in his own words; and it was from his scrap book that Lincoln did most of his reading on the stump. Two days after the convention Mr. Herndon sent a copy of the "fatal" speech to Theodore Parker, with a note telling him that "the convention was the largest and best ever held in the State — more talent and more virtue." Parker replied at once, rejoicing that Douglas was doomed to fall between stools:

Newton Center, Mass., July 1, 1858.

Mr. Herndon.

My Dear Sir:—Many thanks for your letter and for the admirable speech of Mr. Lincoln. I think I shall congratulate you on his Senatorial dignity next winter. Douglas has made a great mistake. Had he gone clear over to the

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, pp. 395-6 (1872).

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, pp. 407-8 (1872).

Republican platform, confessed his sins and asked pardon, the generous people would have forgiven. But now he is neither Republican nor Democrat. It seems to me he is in a bad position, whence I see no retreat or advance. Never think of praising me for what I said, and so oblige,

Yours truly, THEO. PARKER.

II

Many things during this campaign lend color to the belief that, from the first, Lincoln had little hope of being actually elected. No one knew better than he the precariousness of his prospects, and the reasons were succinctly stated by J. L. Scripps, his first biographer. The sympathy entertained for Douglas by prominent Republicans in other parts of the country; the odor of free-soil which he had collected in his garments during the recent session of Congress, notwithstanding his obstinate and blind adherence to the Dred Scott decision; the universal favor to which he had been commended by the persecutions of the Administration; the flagrant apportionment of the State into legislative districts, by which ninety-three thousand people in the Republican counties were virtually disfranchised — all these things combined to give a very unpromising complexion to the campaign.[1] Of this last obstacle Mr. Herndon spoke in his reply to Parker, expressing doubt as to the outcome:

Springfield, Ill., July 8, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Friend:—I thank you for yours of July 1st, and agree with you that Douglas has blundered. We feel that he has committed great faults, and cannot ever recover therefrom. He is dead. Had we a fair apportionment in this State we Republicans could beat him twenty on joint ballot; but as it is, the apportionment having been made when we were very young and wild — not so densely populated as now — he may defeat us. There are some complications, which it would take too long to explain, that hinder us. Some old Senators, elected long ago, hold over,

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. L. Scripps; *New York Tribune Tracts*, No 6, p. 24 (1860).

and whose districts have been revolutionized: they belong to the Republicans, but there is no way of reaching the evil. Time will set us right, and give us our rights. Our State ticket will be elected without much trouble; but as to Lincoln there may be some doubts. These doubts will energize us, fire us, move us.

Mr. Lincoln's speech is quite compact, nervous, eloquent; it is the best expression of Republicanism, as at present organized, that I have seen. Stump orators will take higher and more lofty grounds. Prudence is written all over the political world, and we cannot help it. Do not blame us for not jumping higher just now. Remember your great law of the historic continuity of the development of ideas, and then you will say, "All is right."

Douglas is not a Democrat: he is not a Republican: he is nowhere. Do you remember my former letters? He is trying to build up a third party, or trying to re-organize one out of the fragmentary elements, North and South. He is crazy: God has made His organizations and Douglas cannot unmake them. Thank God for your speech — have re-read it: it is quite good.

Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

Meanwhile, Douglas had been resting in the East, visiting his mother, and, it was said, gathering the sinews of war. Having matured his plans, he returned to Chicago on the 9th of July, where his followers had arranged a royal reception for him. On his way thither, he was met by a delegation of his friends at Michigan City who took him captive and conducted him on a special train to his destination. He entered the city amid the booming of cannon and the fluttering of flags, and was accompanied to the Tremont House by a military escort. From balconies and windows along the streets the shouts of thousands echoed in his ears. More flattering, if possible, was the immense throng that gathered about the hotel in the evening to hear his promised speech. Douglas was highly gratified, remembering his former reception, and indeed a man of far less vanity would have been moved by such a scene.

In a skilful speech, egotistical at times to the point of braggadocio, he opened the campaign. Knowing that he was in a Republican stronghold, he dwelt with elaborate complacency,

which was perhaps pardonable, upon his brave and manly fight against a hated Administration in its effort to fetter Kansas. But he claimed an equal victory over the Republicans in Congress, since they had voted for the Crittenden-Montgomery bill, which permitted Kansas to decide for itself whether it would have slavery or freedom. Such repeated triumphs of the sacred principle of "popular sovereignty" led the speaker naturally from self-glorification to prophecy, and he predicted that the Republicans would soon come over to his side, as many of them had already done, dropping their fancy as to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories in behalf of his great dogma. Nor was this prediction without reason, if we may judge from the havoc he was working in that party in the East, where he had won to his side such men as Greeley and Wilson. No doubt this would have been largely the result had it not been for Lincoln, who was sitting just behind the speaker but within the house, listening.

Referring to his opponent, Douglas assumed a posture of courtesy and said, somewhat condescendingly, if we may trust report: "I take great pleasure in saying that I have known, personally and intimately, for about a quarter of a century, the worthy gentleman who has been nominated for my place, and I will say that I regard him as a kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman, a good citizen and an honorable opponent; and whatever issue I may have with him will be of principle and not involving personalities." This last prediction, however, was doomed to fail of fulfilment before the campaign was half over.

But this compliment, doubtful enough, was the prelude to a savage and sophistical attack upon the speech of Lincoln before the Springfield convention, which Douglas described as "a speech well prepared and carefully written." It must have been irritating to Lincoln to sit still while the solemn opening words of that speech were diverted, if not perverted, into a call "to a war of sections, a war of the North against the South," and a demand for a uniformity of customs in the nation; as if slavery were only a local custom. Such uni-

formity of local custom meant, he insisted, the blotting out of State sovereignty, and the merging of all the States into an empire, which was opposed to all the teachings of the fathers. Coming to the Dred Scott case, which was the flaw in the Douglas armor, in that it had already virtually blotted out State sovereignty, the artful speaker vaulted over it with the remark, uttered with great show of impressiveness, that he "had no idea of appealing from the decision of the Supreme Court upon a constitutional question to the decision of a tumultuous town meeting." That was ever his method: if he could not elucidate a point he would fatally befog it for his opponent; and so skilful was he in this art, that it would have been impossible for any man of the same type to meet him, without being destroyed in the first encounter.[1] But Lincoln, it need hardly be said, was not of the same type.

On the following evening Lincoln replied to Douglas from the balcony of the same hotel, and a vast throng greeted him with lusty cheers. If his lack of skill in the practice of sophistry seemed a disadvantage, it was soon evident to all that he knew how to pick "the Little Dodger" up on the point of his logic. Nor was it long before even the friends of Douglas felt that the Senator would have to come down off his "high horse" and appeal from the decision of the Supreme Court to many a tumultuous town meeting. This must be counted among the victories of Lincoln, though it could not have been achieved in ordinary times, for to attack a decision of the Supreme Court is not easy to do against an experienced debater like Douglas. But he was plainly on the defensive when he came to deal with the deductions drawn by Douglas from his figure of a house divided against itself. Already that utterance had created something resembling a panic in his own party, and Lincoln was in a place where he had to hold the support of Lovejoy without losing the support of men who regarded Lovejoy as a fanatic. Illinois was itself a house divided against itself, half Northern and half Southern in feeling; and even in the northern part, while opposition to the exten-

[1] *Twenty Years of Congress*, by J. G. Blaine, Vol. I, p. 145 (1884).

sion of slavery was pronounced, there was but little sympathy with extreme abolitionism. Douglas knew this, but he discovered later, in their joint debates, that it was unwise to press Lincoln on this point. For as often as he did so, just so often did Lincoln repeat that terrible prophecy, and always with a solemn earnestness which made the hearts of men stand still.

At once Douglas mapped out his itinerary and set out to conquer Illinois, with Lincoln hot upon his trail. Having the Illinois Central Railroad on his side, with a special car at his disposal, he traveled in state. Trimmed with flags and bunting, his luxurious coach sped from town to town, with a platform car attached bearing a twelve-pound cannon to fire salutes. Brass bands and colored banners heralded his coming, and committees of distinguished citizens headed by mayors received him with every token of jubilation and pomp. No hero returning from the wars was ever hailed with greater ovations than the champion of "popular sovereignty." Once, as the decorated car of Douglas swept by, Lincoln, side-tracked in a freight train, said with a chuckle: "The gentleman in that turnout evidently smelt no royalty in our carriage!"

So journeying, they arrived at Bloomington, an old Whig stronghold, where Douglas, speaking in the afternoon, reminded his hearers that Lincoln had within a short time abandoned the Whig party, and had joined with Lyman Trumbull, who had deserted the Democrats, in an organized effort to abolitionize the State. With an air of triumph he magnified the enormity of this desertion, not knowing, apparently, that nearly the whole town had been guilty of the same crime. His speech was engagingly ingenious, but it verged upon bathos at the end when he described himself as standing beside the deathbed of Henry Clay and receiving the parting blessing of that immortal Whig — as once before he had pictured himself performing the same office for "the god-like Webster." Lincoln followed with an effective speech in the evening, in which he not only lodged an emphatic demurrer against the quibbles of Douglas, but stated his case with great earnestness and power.

The next day, rainy and sultry, found them at Springfield,

the home of Lincoln and a Douglas stronghold. Once more Lincoln followed his opponent with a telling speech, mixing humor, logic, facts, and satire. As for the right of the people to govern themselves in ordinary matters, about which Douglas was wont "to stand up in majesty, and go through his apotheosis and become a god," that was a principle which neither man nor mouse was opposing. But slavery was no ordinary matter, and the Dred Scott decree had made such unctuous devotion to the dogma of "popular sovereignty" a quixotic absurdity. So deeply had he pressed this point at Chicago that Douglas had already begun to slide down from his "high horse," far enough at least to make two very earnest appeals from Judge Taney to the voters of Illinois. Speaking of "the small trappings of the campaign," Lincoln did not fail to note that the Democrats with "their thunderings of cannon, their marching and music, the fizzlegigs and fireworks," were trying to carry the State by mere brute noise. Among the disadvantages under which he labored he mentioned the unfair apportionment of the State, which the Legislature had refused to correct. And there was another disadvantage:

> Senator Douglas is of world-wide renown. All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party, have been looking upon him as certainly, at no distant day, to be the President of the United States. They have seen in his round, jolly, fruitful face, postoffices, land-offices, marshalships and cabinet appointments, chargeships and foreign missions, bursting and spouting out in wonderful exuberance, ready to be laid hold of by their greedy hands. And as they have gazed upon this attractive picture so long, they cannot, in the little distraction that has taken place in the party, bring themselves to give up the charming hope; but with greedier anxiety they rush about him, sustain him, give him marches, triumphal entries, and receptions beyond what even in the days of his highest prosperity they could have brought about in his favor. On the contrary, nobody ever expected me to be President. In my poor, lean, lank face, nobody has ever seen that any cabbages were sprouting out.

That his blows were being felt was shown by the fact that the

Democratic papers began to say, derisively, that he could not get a crowd except by following in the wake of the great Senator. The truth is that he was doing all within his power to provoke a challenge from Douglas to a combat of debate, but his wily foe was not disposed to invite such a contest. Perhaps Douglas had too vivid a recollection of past encounters to desire a repetition of them; otherwise he would not have waited for a challenge, but would himself have thrown down the glove to Lincoln as soon as he entered the State. At last, on July 24th, Lincoln sent him a note, suggesting that they divide time and address the same audiences during the canvass. This meant that every meeting thenceforward, to the end of the campaign, should be a joint debate. Rumor was rife that Douglas did not wish to engage in debate, and had said so privately.

Certainly he was loath to accept. He was aware that such a contest, with the eyes of the nation fixed upon it, would make Lincoln a national figure; that, as he remarked, "If he gets the best of the debate — and I want to say he is the ablest man the Republicans have got — I shall lose everything and Lincoln will gain everything." While, in public, he might refer to Lincoln, patronizingly, as an "amiable and intelligent gentleman," he knew the power of the man when he said to his friends in private: "I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party — full of wit, facts, dates — and the best stump speaker, with his droll ways and dry jokes, in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd, and, if I beat him, my victory will be hardly won."[1] Then, too, Douglas had expected to come home to an easy, triumphant campaign, in the warmth of approval for his really gallant fight against Buchanan: he did not wish, as Lincoln was evidently forcing him to do, to discuss his own record, least of all the moral issue of slavery; and it was only human that he should hesitate to take up such a task as Lincoln has set for him. But he knew that if he declined the challenge on any grounds whatever, he would lose the battle.

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, p. 352 (1908).

Nor was it without mingled feelings that Lincoln had sent his note of challenge. He knew that Douglas had the advantage of position, and the prestige of great and long continued success; that the power of money, which always supports the conservative and aristocratic side, was with him; that he had unusual arts of sophistry and subterfuge, making him difficult to meet in debate, even by such men as Seward, Sumner, and Chase. Besides, he knew that, while in the ability to hit straight and hard blows he was the equal of Douglas, "the long, labored movements" of his own mind, of which he used to talk to Herndon, made him deficient in quick and nimble fencing. He was keenly conscious, as well, of the contrast between the dazzling fame of Douglas and his own humble lot in the world. "With me," he said, with a shadow of sadness on his dark yellow face, "the race of ambition has been a failure — a flat failure; with him it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation, and is not unknown even in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached — so reached that the oppressed of my species might have shared with me in the elevation, I would rather stand on that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch's brow."[1] Still, he was not unmindful of the opportunity to send his name afar, but he seems to have been honestly more eager to plead his great cause in a national forum than to gain personal renown. Such a debate was not to be lightly entered upon, but Lincoln was ready for it, having prepared his speeches while watching the flies on the ceiling of his back office.

While declining to divide all his time, Douglas agreed to seven joint debates to be held, with two exceptions, in the central part of the State, where the real battle was to be fought. He intimated, rather unfairly, that Lincoln had purposely waited until he had arranged his itinerary, and hinted the possibility of a third candidate with whom Lincoln might make common cause. In reply Lincoln resented the imputation of unfairness, but agreed to the seven debates, leaving

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, pp. 408-9 (1872).

Douglas to name the dates and places. Douglas selected Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and Alton, two debates to be held in August, two in September, and three in October. Lincoln acceded, somewhat grudgingly, as the scheme, so arranged, gave Douglas four openings and closings to his three; though that was not unfair, since he had been "closing in" upon the Senator, as one of his friends put it, for two weeks. On the same day that Lincoln sent his note to Douglas, Herndon wrote to Mr. Parker:

Springfield, Ill., July 24, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—I this day received your Fourth of July oration. I thank you most sincerely. I have read it carefully, and say that it is most excellent, quite eloquent. We are approaching a very animated, warm, energetic canvass; and if it does not get into personalities it will be a great, and, I think, grand canvass. I fear, however, that personalities will creep into the debates. Mr. Lincoln takes broader and deeper grounds than he did in the Springfield speech. I told you the speakers would do so, and even Lincoln had to follow. The canvass opens deep and rich; but we Republicans have a clever villain to combat. Douglas is an ambitious and an unscrupulous man; he is the greatest liar in all America; he misrepresents Lincoln throughout, and our people generally are not logical enough to see the precise manner, point and issue of the deception. He holds up in glowing letters "squatter sovereignty," which he knows is dead and buried under the Dred Scott case. It suits his purpose, however, and he fiddles on it quite cunningly and shrewdly. Politics is a great game and delusion is its greatest power. The politician who knows the game and can use that delusion the cunningest, is the greatest man. Hurrah for politics — Bah!

I spoke in this city on Thursday evening to a crowded house — spoke to the Republican young men. I am the young man's friend, and am not without influence among them. I shall always use it for the Eternal Right, popular or unpopular. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

All during this exciting and bitter contest Herndon was alert, tireless, and immensely useful, for his position made it possible for him to do many things that Lincoln could not do; many

things indeed, that Lincoln would not do, but most of which he approved. Early and late the junior partner was busy writing editorials, working tricks on pro-slavery papers,[1] organizing clubs, feeling the popular pulse — for which he had a rare gift — and looking up facts, dates, and history for his chief. Again and again Lincoln telegraphed or wrote to the office for information, and Herndon was invariably ready with it. No task was too difficult, none too exacting or exhausting, for him to undertake in behalf of the cause and its leader, with an enthusiasm inspired equally by political principle and personal friendship. Besides, he found time to do some very effective work on the stump, journeying all over central Illinois and speaking to vast throngs.

As an orator Herndon was picturesque and impressive, of resonant voice and dignified bearing, rapid in his thought, vivid in his imagery, multi-colored in his rhetoric; less logical than Lincoln, but more facile; more restrained than Lovejoy, but hardly less radical; a man who held great audiences and swayed them with ease. On a sultry summer evening early in the campaign he spoke at Petersburg, when Donati's comet, then touring the sky, was visible in unusual splendor. After speaking for nearly three hours, he turned to the comet and addressed it in a graphic peroration. Sketching the state of society when it had last appeared, and the changes wrought during its absence, he appealed to the heavenly pilgrim to inform its sisterhood of the things about to be done in the name of God and human liberty. Those who heard him that evening went away instructed, solemnized, and exalted. But he could be argumentative also, as witness the speech referred to in his letter to Mr. Parker:

Springfield, Ill., July 28, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—I told you a few days ago of a speech that I made to our Republican club here. I send you a line cut from the *Illinois Journal,* which gives one phase of that speech. I really think it is law, and am going to urge it on the stump, ready to back it up by analogy, reason, and the

[1] *Abraham Lincoln,* by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 38-9.

constitution. If the Democracy can carry this case, the inhumanity to the *blacks*, and the denial of the constitutional rights of the *whites*, if they can enslave all the Territories under the title of "sacred right of self-government," and if they can do as they have done in Kansas for four years in the name of constitutional law, then they can enslave the white man and deshrine God under the name of Democracy. I send you these clippings to let you know that I am on duty. Will soon take the stump and go over the State, or at least the central part of it.

Yours truly, W. H. HERNDON.

In brief, his argument was that by act of Congress, in 1789, the Federal courts were given cognizance of suits of a civil nature at common law or in equity, where the suit was between citizens of different States. But the Supreme Court, in the Dred Scott case, had decided that a negro *was not a citizen*, and for that reason could not sue. As, however, by the terms of the act, both parties to the suit must be citizens, if the negro was incapable of suing, he was equally incapable of being sued. So that, if a negro in Illinois owed a white man in Missouri a sum of money, which he refused to pay, there was no recourse at law. Thus the Dred Scott decree, by placing a disability upon negroes, had worked a glaring outrage upon the white man, leaving him without remedy in the Federal courts, while it made the negro wholly irresponsible for his contracts. And with this point Herndon goaded his Democratic foes until the votes were cast.

At Springfield Douglas had noticed, for the first time, the charge of Lincoln that he and his party leaders were conspirators plotting to make slavery national, remarking that he did not think so badly of the President and the Supreme Court. Thereupon Lincoln had made the charge more specific by adding that Douglas had "left a niche in the Nebraska Bill to receive the Dred Scott decision," which declared that a Territorial Legislature could not abolish slavery. Douglas was not slow to discover that the charge, left in this shape, was beginning to hurt. So, at Clinton, he read the charge to his audience, and said that his self-respect alone prevented him

from calling it a falsehood. But at Beardstown, a few days later, his self-respect had broken down, and with wild and angry gestures he pronounced it "an infamous lie!" Three hours afterward Lincoln was on the same spot summing up the evidence for his charge in a passage which for cumulative force and acumen could not be surpassed, followed quickly by another pitched in that tone of half-sad soliloquy and appeal, so often heard during the debates:

> Think nothing of me: take no thought for the political fate of any man whomsoever, but come back to the truths that are in the Declaration of Independence. You may do anything with me you choose, if you will but heed those sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry and insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity — the Declaration of American Independence.

III

It is not easy to be just to Senator Douglas during the contest of 1858.[1] Not only in the methods he employed, but in his very bearing and in the spirit he displayed, he had every aspect of a model demagogue. One expects hard hitting and rough speech at such times, though Douglas was unnecessarily offensive; but that is not so much the ground of complaint as the fact that he persistently evaded the real issue, and when

[1] Of course, in the bitterness of political acrimony, many things were said and writen of Senator Douglas which were unjust. Even his personal habits were exaggerated and he was pictured as a coarse, vulgar, and almost brutal man. — *Life and Letters of E. L. Godkin*, Vol. I, pp. 177-8 (1907). Partisan eyes saw little that was admirable in him. — *Reminiscences*, by Carl Schurz, Vol. II, p. 95 (1909). On the other side are the portrayals by such men as Koerner and Clark E. Carr, who knew him, and the picture is more engaging, because more true. — *Stephen A. Douglas*, by C. E. Carr, pp. 41-52 (1909).

he could not evade it he deliberately beclouded it. We have to remember, however, that he entered the field in face of an alert and powerful foe, disappointed that there was to be a contest at all, with defection and betrayal in the rear, and that he was fighting for his political life. If this did not excuse some of the methods and tactics to which he resorted, it may mitigate a too severe judgment of the man.

On his personal side, Senator Douglas was a man of many admirable and lovable traits, which won for him the loyalty of thousands who had no thought of favors past or to come. Of short and stocky figure, a little corpulent, though not too much so, he was agile, graceful, athletic, and a dynamo of vitality. His head was massive, crowned with rich brown hair, sprinkled with grey; his forehead high, open, and finely shaped; his eyebrows thick and heavy; his eyes large, deeply set, of dark blue, flashing fire when stirred; his mouth cleanly cut and very expressive; his chin square and full, with eddying dimples — every line bespeaking energy, audacity, and power. Affable, gracious, and winning, he was a good mixer who never forgot a name, an incessant smoker, at times convivial but rarely to excess; equally at home in the Senate or on the stump; a man who never turned his back to a foe or upon a friend. Of indomitable pluck, he was truly kind-hearted, and a man of great ability. If he had been one degree more refined he would perhaps have been many degrees less popular.

In that peculiar style of oratory, which, in its intensity, resembles physical combat, Douglas had no equal.[1] His presence was dominating, his personality compact and impressive, his voice strong, but not well modulated. Calm in stating facts, he was passionate in attack, disdainful when forced to defend, and without scruple when pushed to the wall. In assertion bold, in denunciation bitter — yet repenting a poisoned shaft as soon as it left his bow — not caring to persuade so much as to force the assent of his hearers, he was the Danton, not the Mirabeau, of oratory. Fluent in speech, facile in

[1] *Twenty Years of Congress*, by J. G. Blaine, Vol. I, p. 144 (1884).

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

[*By courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Society*]

logic, he was skilled in all the tricks of rough and tumble debate, and in the art of manipulating audiences, though apparently devoid alike of humor and of pathos.[1] He was not a student, aside from the political history of the nation, of which his knowledge was minute and critical. His English was bold, terse, and pointed, rarely adorned with simile, and never, it is said, with a line of poetry. His speeches, like those of Clay, do not read well — he lacked entirely the literary quality — but they were immensely effective at the time, delivered as they were with vehement gesture and great personal force. Such was Douglas at his best, but towards the end of the debates his voice became sinister and harsh, as befitted the ugly mood of a man worn down with hoarseness and rage.

Lincoln belonged to another order of men. He lacked almost every grace of presence and of elocution, but he produced such effects as only a great orator may create. Logical thrusts deft and piercing, humorous retorts quaint and pat, witty illustrations apt and unforgetable, united in his speech with a moral earnestness, a candor, a sincerity, a calm force of reason, and a simple, direct, sky-clear style which left no shadow on his meaning. His very voice, so high and often rasping, with little feeling of harmony in it, and little variety of cadence; his enunciation, so careful, so deliberate, and at times so hesitating; his restrained and awkward manner, in which there was nothing of the daring reckless freedom of the popular agitator — all these added to the impression that he

[1] "He would enjoy and laugh at stories, but there is no record that he ever told one. He appreciated a pun, but he never made one." — *Stephen A. Douglas,* by C. E. Carr, p. 44. On the evening before he arrived in Chicago, on July 9th, the city council had passed a resolution denouncing the Dred Scott decision. This was what Douglas meant by appealing from the Supreme Court to "a town meeting," which reminded him of an old friend who used to say that to get justice one should take a case to the Illinois Supreme Court, and from that court take an appeal to a justice of the peace. Lincoln's voice was heard from behind, *sotto voce,* calling, "Judge! Judge!" Douglas paused and turned around, and Lincoln said, "Judge, that was when you were on the Illinois Supreme Bench!" So far from being angry, Douglas repeated the joke of his "friend Lincoln" to the audience.

was an honest man seeking to know and tell the truth. He was usually embarrassed at the beginning, so that the faces of his friends sometimes fell in dismay. He rarely raised his hands above his head in gesture, and he had almost none of the hypnotic magnetism which legend attributes to him. All that he tried to do in the way of style, beyond clearness and directness, was to know exactly what he meant to say, to say it, and have done with it.

Most men receive from their audience in vapor what they return in flood, but it was not after that manner that Lincoln was eloquent. With a great throng before him, his thought often seemed to be moving in remote and lonely regions, as one who saw things afar off. His appeal was not so much to his audience as to the individual man of whom it was composed, and to what was highest and best in every one of them. He believed that the human soul, when separated from the tumults which commonly disturb it, cannot refuse to respond to the voice of righteousness and reason, and his faith acted like a spell upon those who heard him. Each man seemed to stand apart from the crowd, and in those great moments when the speaker stood as one transfigured and inspired men felt that their own souls spoke to them in the tones of the orator. Such eloquence, the greatest known among men, is possible only in times of crises, and Lincoln spoke with the ultimate grace of simplicity at an hour when the right word fell with the authority of an apparition.

By this time the State was all aglow from Galena to Cairo — speechifying, denouncing, inveighing, disinterring dead speeches and by-gone slanders, making magniloquent prophecies, and getting up "glorious mass meetings." Lincoln journeyed from Beardstown to Havana, Bath, Lewistown, Canton, and Peoria, speaking at each place, and thence to Ottawa on the 21st of August, where the first joint debate was to take place. There he met Robert R. Hitt,[1] who was to serve him

[1] It was my privilege to know Robert R. Hitt in his later years, and a more delightful gentleman never lived. His personality, while not dazzling or masterful, was picturesque and winning, and his conversation

as reporter, and an audience estimated at about twelve thousand, which had gathered to witness the first encounter. The story of these debates has been often told, and need not be repeated in detail, but a glimpse at this scene may make it more vivid.

From dawn to mid-day, and even the day before, men, women, and children had poured into town, in every sort of "rig." Through clouds of dust they came, under the blistering sun, as on pleasure bent, laughing and joking as they journeyed. Hay-carts, filled with merry young folk, lumbered along over ill-made roads, while straw riders chatted and sang. Market-wagons, loaded with provisions, towed buggies to accommodate the women and babies of the farm; and lads proudly rode their plow-horses to the fray, guiding them with bits of rope for reins. Here and there in the procession an old "prairie schooner" moved slowly forward, the faces of children peeping from its cavernous entrance, and a stovepipe protruding from its roof. Along all converging roads men and barefoot boys trudged through the blinding dust, calling themselves railsplitters or little giants. Ottawa overflowed onto the bluffs and out into the fields, where by noon-day good-natured crowds were cooking dinner, exchanging greetings, sharing food, and discussing the merits of the debaters. Everyone seemed to be in a holiday mood, and while each side

graphic and brilliant. His mind was a treasure-house of curiously interesting and generally unknown facts about historic men and movements, and he could easily have been the Plutarch of the statesmen of his day. Many of his friends — the writer among them — repeatedly urged Mr. Hitt to write his reminiscences, but he as often declined. In Winston Churchill's story, *The Crisis*, Mr. Hitt appears as "Hill" — Churchill having learned the facts, in their vivid human color at least, from a conversation with Mr. Hitt. Like John Hay — whom he resembled in more ways than one — as a young man Hitt caught the glow of the moral idealism of Lincoln, and to that simple teaching he added the culture and polish of a man of the world. But, in all his career, as a diplomat, as the head of important commissions, as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where he was so long a distinction and an ornament, it was a poish that revealed, as true polish always does reveal, the fine grain his manhood.

was sure of victory very little ill-feeling was displayed. Peddlers were everywhere exhibiting their wares, and almost every farmer had something to "swap," which gave the scene the aspect of a county fair.

Shortly after noon, special trains began to arrive, bands were playing, banners fluttering, and the streets were jammed. Rival processions moved to and fro — one, a mile long, marched down the Peru road to Buffalo Rock to meet Douglas, and two brass cannons roared salutes as he entered the town. Lincoln arrived, entered a gaily decorated carriage, and his friends formed a noisy escort to the home of the mayor, led by a band and carrying all sorts of banners, some in honor of "Abe the Giant Killer," and others announcing "Edgar County for the Tall Sucker!" By this time a free fight was going on near the platform on the square, where the debate was to be held, so eager was the crowd to be close to the speakers. Douglas, not without difficulty, forced his way through the throng and reached the platform, where he bowed gracefully to the cheering multitude. Then came Lincoln, followed by Mayor Glover and Owen Lovejoy, and the sight of him was a signal for deafening applanse, at which Douglas scowled. Scarcely could two men more unlike, in physical and mental makeup, have been brought together.

No formality of introduction was needed, and Douglas, who was to open the debate, plunged forthwith into a tirade upon the Republican party, which he said was Abolitionism in disguise, organized in Illinois as the result of a compact between Lincoln and Trumbull who wanted office. With great flourish he linked their names with those of "Father Giddings and Fred Douglass," laying special emphasis upon the last name. He then read a list of questions to his opponent based upon a series of resolutions which, he alleged, had been reported by Lincoln, as chairman of the committee, to a Republican State convention, held at Springfield in October, 1854. Those resolutions declared, among other things, for the admission of no more Slave States and the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. Such radical demands, he argued, were of a piece with the

speech of Lincoln in accepting his nomination, which he said was a threat of war against the South. All of which proved that the Republican party was revolutionary and sectional, and as such dangerous, even going so far as to advocate the equality of negroes and whites. It was a bold and skilful speech, an attack not an argument, an appeal to prejudice not to reason. Never did Douglas give better proof of his right to the title of *little* giant than on that day.

Lincoln was plainly vexed when he rose, but he soon recovered himself and began his reply with the same dignity and courtesy that marked him to the end. If he had not been a most adroit debater he could not have escaped the first onslaught, for he had to pick his way between two extremes; but he could not be provoked into a blunder. Taking up "the little follies" of his antagonist, as he called them, he denied any compact with Trumbull, and merely remarked, as he truly could, that no Republican convention was held in Springfield, or anywhere else, in 1854, and that he was not present at the meeting referred to. On the contrary, he was in another county, attending court — thanks to the strategy of Herndon. Having disposed of these trifles, he proceeded to the real issues, refusing to be diverted from great principles to petty prejudices. By this time all trace of annoyance and embarrassment had vanished, and in dwelling upon the Dred Scott case he dealt a series of thrusts that made Douglas and his friends squirm. One Irishman, aweary of the prodding, cried out, "Give us something besides Drid Scott!"

There was no escaping him; what he wanted to make plain was that Douglas had some reason for standing by the Dred Scott infamy, other than loyalty to the courts, which he dared not admit. Douglas had not said that the decision was right in itself, but simply that it had been decided by the court and, as such, he must take it as a rule of political action. But he had defied other decisions of the same court, and had won his seat on the Illinois Supreme Bench, and his title of "Judge," by being appointed, with four others, to vote down a ruling of that tribunal. So there must be a reason, "a pur-

pose, strong as death and eternity, for which he adheres to this decision, and for which he will adhere to all other decisions of the same court.'' Having driven this point home, he passed slowly into a peroration which evoked such a storm of applause that Douglas, in his half-hour reply, was powerless to stay it:

> Judge Douglas is going back to the era of our Revolution, and, to the extent of his ability, muzzling the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. When he invites any people, willing to have slavery, to establish it, he is blowing out the moral lights around us. When he says he ''cares not whether slavery is voted down or voted up''— that it is a sacred right of self-government — he is, in my judgment, penetrating the human soul, and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty in this American people. And now I will only say, that when by these means and appliances, Judge Douglas shall succeed in bringing public sentiment to an exact accord with his own views — when these vast assemblies shall echo back all these sentiments — when they shall come to repeat his views, and to say all that he says on these mighty questions — then it needs only the formality of a second Dred Scott decision, which he endorses in advance, to make slavery alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

After this no one doubted that it was to be, on one side at least, the battle of a giant. Both men were able, astute, and masterful, both were seasoned politicians, both were hard hitters in debate, and both knew Illinois from Chicago to Cairo. Lincoln excelled Douglas in his devotion to an idea, its probable consequences, and all that it implied, and thus gained the advantage which the thorough-going logician must always gain over the hair-splitting opportunist. He was less of an egoist than Douglas, less ambitious, and therefore less selfish, for Douglas would never have yielded to Trumbull as Lincoln did. Yet Douglas was a great party leader — not incapable of sacrifices — inferior to Lincoln only on his moral side. Two days later Herndon wrote to Theodore Parker:

Springfield, Ill., August 23, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—Some days since I received from you four sermons delivered before the "Progressive Friends." The first two are excellent, the third eloquent, and the fourth is the heart development of religion. You have almost, in this, excelled yourself, and I wish this resumé was in the hands of every American citizen, so that all might see what *the* religion is.

Now for Illinois politics. Mr. Lincoln spoke at Ottawa on Saturday. Mr. Douglas also spoke there. This was their first place of meeting. We have not heard from them, but we Republicans know how the debate ended, if Lincoln was well. Lincoln will deliver a speech there that will do himself credit. He is too much of a Kentucky gentleman to debate with Douglas; he will not condescend to lie. He will not bend to expediency; he will not hug shams, and so he labors under a disadvantage in this State. Yet he will take hold of Douglas and prove the conspiracy to enslave America on him. He has got the documents and will shoot the charge home.

Judge Trumbull made a very fine speech at Chicago, a week or so since, which you have doubtless seen; it was what we out West call a "clincher." Politics is getting hot, angry, furious here; we are determined to kill off Douglas, if we can by honest, fair, manly means. We will resort to no wrong, no baseness, no demogogism, no trickery or "truppery." We have charged Douglas with a conspiracy to enslave America, and we think the proof incontestible. The whole Free, as well as the Slave States look on this Illinois battle, we suppose, with a good deal of interest. How is it? This State is being fired up from Cairo to Chicago, and from Quincy to Paris, from center to circumference. Our Republican friends take high ground for Freedom — as high as our people will bear just now. What we may do in the future I cannot say. You know the under-currents as well as I do — better I dare say.

Why is it that you Eastern people are for Douglas; I mean your leaders? If you have a friend, whom you wish to go to the White House, tell him to keep his fingers out of our fight — keep his wishes to himself, if he is for Douglas. Greeley had better attend to New York; he will have all he can attend to well at that. There is something in the wind, which is not today graspable. It will come some

time. I will tell you in due time — before 1860. I am out making speeches — send you a slip noticing one I made in Logan County a few days ago.

Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

What Lincoln thought of the debates was disclosed, incidentally, in a remark made later at Quincy, when he said: "I was aware when it was first agreed that Judge Douglas and I were to have these seven joint discussions, that they were the successive acts of a drama — perhaps I should say to be enacted not merely in the face of audiences like this, but in the face of a Nation, and to some extent by my relation to him and not from anything in myself, in the face of the world." So he had changed his style, largely eliminating his anecdotal vein, his mimicry, his fantastic humor — with which, had he used them, he could probably have routed Douglas off the stage. But he knew that his words must stand the test of cold type and be read by thoughtful men in far away places, when voice, manner, and gesture were withdrawn. If he could not entirely ignore the trivial and ephemeral, his speeches, especially in the earlier debates, were singularly free from the slag of the hour. No doubt this was his chief aim at Freeport, when, with his famous questions, he made Douglas face some of the real issues.

IV

After speaking at Galesburg, Macomb, and other points, Lincoln started north to Freeport, where the next debate was to be held on August 27th. He seems to have been in one of his Hamlet moods all the way: indeed, he kept a copy of Shakespeare with him, and would often slip away from the throngs and walk alone to read and muse betimes. Friends boarded the train along the road, anxious to know what questions he intended to ask Douglas; for they knew the art of Douglas in turning and twisting things to his own advantage. They also knew that "the Little Dodger" was nonplused and smarting under the charge that the radical resolutions upon which he had harped so effectively at Ottawa, were a forgery.

When Lincoln read his list of interrogatories, Judd, Medill, Ray, and Washburne, unanimously counseled him not to put the second question. "For," they argued, "he will perceive that an answer giving practical force and effect to the Dred Scott decision in the Territories inevitably loses him the battle, and he will reply by affirming the decision as an abstract principle, but denying its practical application."[1]

"If he answers that way," said Lincoln, "he is a dead cock in the pit; he can never be President."

"But that," they insisted, "is none of your business; you are concerned only about the Senatorship."

"No, gentlemen," continued Lincoln, "not alone exactly. I am killing bigger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." So the question was put, and Douglas answered without hesitation, and even jauntily, as follows:

> Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State constitution?
>
> It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a Territory under the Constitution, the people have the lawful means to introduce or exclude it as

[1] The tradition of this conference has been pronounced a fiction by some, particularly by Clark E. Carr. — *Stephen A. Douglas*, pp. 176-184 (1909). One must admit that the place of the conference is located variously, at Chicago, Mendota, Dixon, and Freeport; but that some sort of protest by the friends of Lincoln was made, seems clear. Scripps, Holland, Lamon, Herndon, Arnold, Whitney, Medill, all, in fact, who had opportunity to know report such a meeting. Robert R. Hitt — as "Hill" in *The Crisis* — and Horace White confirm it. That Lincoln did say "I am killing larger game; the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this," is certainly true. As we shall see in the letters of Mr. Herndon, reproduced in another chapter, he had said this from the beginning of the campaign. It is true that Douglas had answered the question, or at least stated his position, many times before, but never on so conspicuous an occasion, and in hearing of the whole nation. It is also true that some of the friends of Lincoln, Medill in particular, exaggerated the foresight of their leader, for it is hardly probable that Lincoln had any reference to his part in the battle of 1860.

> they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature; and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. If, on the contrary, they are for it, their legislation will favor its extension. Hence, no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on that abstract question, still the right of the people to make a Slave Territory or a Free Territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska Bill. I hope Mr. Lincoln deems my answer satisfactory on that point.

So far from being cornered, Douglas only repeated what he had said at Chicago, Bloomington, and Springfield, and as early as 1856; and he might have added that at least one Southern Senator had said the same thing. At Jonesboro, as we shall see, Lincoln made a trenchant analysis of this answer, showing that Douglas, for all his adherence to the Dred Scott decision, as to a "thus saith the Lord," had devised a scheme whereby a local legislature could effectually defy it and make it void. Apart from this thrust, Lincoln seems not to have attached any remote importance to the ditch he was supposed to be digging for Douglas and the Northern Democrats, in so far as it might affect their relations with the South. Logically he had scored heavily, for surely one cannot thwart the highest law lawfully; but humanity is not often logical, least of all in a time of anger and crisis. What effect, if any, the "Freeport Doctrine," as it is called, had on the subsequent career of Senator Douglas, no one can tell. That it was bruited all over the South, with hostile comment in the press, is true, though perhaps he counteracted it by his use of race prejudice in the debate. At any rate, after 1858 events moved with such rapidity and confusion that no one can trace the influence of this dogma.

Of the questions propounded to Lincoln, only one gave him any trouble; and that was as to whether he would admit new Slave States. He replied, categorically, that he was not

pledged against admitting a new Slave State, but that he should be exceedingly sorry ever to be put in a position of having to pass upon that question. Yet should the people of a Territory, having a fair chance and a clear field, uninfluenced by the actual presence of the evil among them, do such an extraordinary thing as to adopt a slave constitution, he saw no alternative, if we own the country, but to admit them into the Union.[1] This was indeed a most reluctant and hesitating answer, of which the wily Douglas was not slow to make note. For the rest, the Freeport debate was decidedly a Lincoln victory, though the bombastic ranting of Douglas made it seem otherwise to those to whom sound and fury signified much. On the day following the debate Theodore Parker wrote to his Western friend, blistering Douglas and Greeley, while predicting the victory of Seward in 1860:

Boston, Mass., Aug. 28, 1858.

Hon. W. H. Herndon.

My Dear Sir:—Thanks for your kind letter and the benevolent things you say about my sermons. I look with great interest on the contest in your State, and read the speeches, the noble speeches of Mr. Lincoln with enthusiasm. One I saw in the *Tribune* of last week will injure Douglas very much. I never recommended the Republicans to adopt Douglas into their family. I said in a speech last January, "he is a mad dog;" just now he is barking at the wolf which has torn our sheep. But he himself is more dangerous than the wolf. I think I should not let him into the fold.

[1] When Douglas "trotted Lincoln down into Egypt," he harped loudly upon this hesitating and evasive answer. "Let me tell Mr. Lincoln that his party in the northern part of the State hold to that Abolition platform, and if they do not in the south and center, they present the extraordinary spectacle of a house divided against itself." Lamon, apparently on the authority of Judge Logan, says that in the struggle for the Senate in 1855, Lincoln pledged himself to Lovejoy and his faction in favor of no more Slave States. Douglas did not certainly know of such a pledge, but he suspected some sort of understanding; hence his persistence on this point. — *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, pp 361-365 (1872). But Lincoln said he was not so pledged, and never had been, which makes the story of Lamon hardly credible.

Greeley is not fit for a leader. He is capricious, crochety, full of whims, and as wrong headed as a pig. How he talks on political economy, which he knows so little about! How he took the side of Russia in the Crimean War! How he is now unwilling to object to the admission of a new Slave State, and what a mean defense of a mean speech! He is honest, I think, but pitiably weak for a man in such a position. But he is quite humane, and surrounds himself with some of the best talent in the country. Do you see what the Richmond *Whig* says about Buchanan; that means that the *Whig* is fattening Edward Everett for the Presidency. Much good may it do him. I think the Republican party will nominate Seward for the Presidency, and elect him in 1860; then the wedge is entered and will be driven home.

Yours truly, THEODORE PARKER.

No one, of all those who have written of these stormy days, has drawn such a political map of Illinois as is found in the reply of Herndon to the above letter. He describes the situation with singular fidelity, setting forth the difficulties, while watching the words of Douglas with special reference to the "land lust of the Slave-Power." The letter is as valuable as it is vivid:

Springfield, Ill., August 31, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—I have but a moment to spare, and I propose to devote it to you. I have been out on the stump, doing all I can for Republicanism. The politics now in our State are in the blue-hot condition; it has ceased to sparkle, but now it burns. Mr. Lincoln and Senator Douglas have had two "hitches," and it is the opinion of good sensible men that so far Lincoln has the decided advantage.

In their late debate at Freeport, Douglas took the stand that *at present* we needed no more territory. You remember I told you what Douglas told me, at Washington, that he would oppose the acquisition of Cuba, Central America, etc. He seems as good as his word. You know I told you what he said about the passage of Lecompton; it turned out as he said, and doubtless you recollect other pledges he made me, and which I told you when in Boston. When I once told you by letter, that if I could once "look Douglas in the eye" I could tell what he intended, you supposed, doubtless, that I was quite arrogant, did you not? By the

by, do you remember what I told you about Friend Greeley, that is, that the Republican platform was too "hifalutin," too abstract, in his opinion, and that it ought to be lowered —"slid down?" What is now unfortunately taking place? I fear the Republican platform will get deeper in the "hell" direction than the old Whig platform for measures. I hope you will continue to remember my conversation with you, not because I said it, but because what was said was uttered by greater men. I always tell you the truth — never dodge.

If you remember, our State is a peculiar one politically: first, we have a north which is all intelligence, all for freedom. Secondly, we have a South, people from the sand hills of the South, poor white folks. These are pro-slavery and ignorant "up to the hub." And thirdly, we have a belt of land, seventy-five miles in width, running from the east bank of the Mississippi to the Wabash — to Indiana; and running north and south, from Bloomington to Alton. In or upon this strip or belt of land this "great battle" between Lincoln and Douglas is to be fought and victory won. On this belt are three classes of individuals: first, Yankees; secondly, intelligent Southerners; and thirdly, poor whites. I now speak sectionally. Again: on this belt are four political shades of party politics: first, Republicans; second, Americans (old Whigs); third, Douglas Democrats; and fourth, National Democrats, Buchanan men. "Quite a muss." Two of these parties are acting as one; they are the Republicans and Fillmore men. They have a majority over both factions of the Democracy. The materials we have to struggle against are roving, Buffalo, Catholic Irish, backed and guided by the Democracy in the North. They will be run down here on pretense of getting a job, and so in the closely contested fight they will carry, we fear, the uncertain counties. These hell-doomed Irish are all for Douglas, and opposed, here, to the National Administration.

I hope you can understand this complication. I give to you as my opinion, and the opinion of good, honest Republicans, that we will crush Douglas and pro-slaveryism. I give it now as my opinion that Lincoln will be our next United States Senator for Illinois. Your friend,

W. H. Herndon.

If the State was "in a blue-hot condition" following the Freeport encounter, it became hotter still, if possible, as by

slow stages, speaking incessantly at all sorts of meetings, Lincoln and Douglas made their way down through the debatable belt to Egypt. Had the election been held in early July, Douglas would have carried the State by an overwhelming majority, but the tide was beginning to turn. As we shall see in the letters of Herndon, Republican hopes went skyward with great glee, and the Democrats became correspondingly bitter and glum. Greeley afterwards said truly that Lincoln was a great *convincer* of men, and in a difficult situation could do his cause more good and less harm than any man of his day. We have now to follow him through the wild and stormy scenes of the closing debates, in which, if he sometimes lost his temper, he never lost his wits.

CHAPTER VII

The Closing Debates

With his powerful voice and facile energy, Douglas had entered the campaign under full steam, confident of success, and determined to win at any cost. His vanity was colossal, and he lost no opportunity to emphasize his superiority over his adversary, if not indeed over every other man in the nation. At Ottawa his strut was impressive, and to his followers overwhelming, as though Lincoln in his grasp was as a mouse being shaken by a lion. All that he had to do, so he seems to have felt, was to fasten upon his opponent the stigma of Abolitionism, and to belittle his personal history and political pretensions. But Lincoln, though vexed at first, was in nowise overawed by so much greatness, and soon let his opponent know that there was serious business on hand.

As Douglas began to realize that the tide had turned toward Lincoln, he lost some of his confidence and all of his manners. Nothing could surpass the imperious and truculent offensiveness of his behavior at Freeport. Deterred by no feeling of humility, no sense of fairness, no regard for the amenities of debate, he resorted to all the devices of a back-alley demagogue, denying facts, dodging arguments, playing upon prejudice, and hurling epithets with a fluency that scarcely another man of his day could equal. A Republican was always a "black Republican," despite the protest of more than one audience that he change the color and "make it a little brown." Negroes, he said, were stumping for "their brother Abe," who, with Trumbull, was leading a "white, black and mixed drove of disappointed politicians" armed with slander. While pretending to greatness, he did not hesitate to stoop to every cheap and trivial trick of gutter-rabble debate.

I

Still calling Lincoln and Trumbull liars, and expatiating upon the mob spirit prevalent in the " black Republican " party, the Senator wended his way southward to find a more congenial climate. All along he had been eager to " trot Lincoln down into Egypt," threatening what would happen to him when he proclaimed his " negro equality " in that section. What was really happening in the central and southern counties was portrayed, in part at least, in a characteristically vivid letter from Herndon to Parker, describing the state of feeling and some of the causes of the anger of Douglas:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 2, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—I wrote you on yesterday a hasty letter, but I hope you can understand; and I am now just on the eve of taking another tour, just having got back. My object in bothering you is this: I want to put the facts of this canvass clearly before you, so that you may form a tolerably correct opinion. My letter on yesterday was specially devoted to conditions of localities, and to the complication of parties.

Now, in this I propose to speak especially of the state of feeling, first in the individual, and then in the whole masses. You are aware that I am a kind of " clever boy " among our people, and consequently all treat me respectfully — go all places and say all things. This gives me a view of the family circle. Here I hear them talk and sputter in their own way — look out of their own eyes. I state to you from this standpoint, that the spirit of Liberty, Freedom every way, is flooding out and clothing the outer clouds with frills of gold and fire. This is not only so in the Republican party, but it is so with respect to the Democratic. This disposition has reached to places very remote. In places that I came near being mobbed in 1855 and '56 men are this day aware of the truth, and are somewhat aroused on all questions of Freedom. This is so in religion. One good thing has resulted from Douglas's war on the clergy: it has opened the people's eyes in that direction; they have in fact commenced a series of inquiries. The world wags, I assure you. I have been in the south part of the State,

" on the sly," organizing clubs, etc., and know what I am talking about. The huge mass begins, just begins, to move. It moves, it is true, heavily and gruntingly, yet it does move. This is the state of individuals and the condition of the masses. Apply it, as you will do, and it follows that the people are ready to hear. They do hear Douglas and Lincoln. Five thousand go; ten, twenty, thirty thousand, it is said, go.

In the debates between Douglas and Lincoln, Douglas is mad, is wild, and sometimes I should judge " half seas over." Douglas gets mad: he calls Lincoln a liar; he calls Trumbull a liar. I heard Judge Trumbull here a few days since, and saw him demonstrate that Douglas struck out of the Toombs Bill that provision which required a submission of the Lecompton constitution to the people. I saw him demonstrate that Douglas put another provision in the bill absolutely prohibiting the people from voting on the constitution. These things I saw *proved* by the original papers, printed at Washington. Again: Douglas says that the Republicans of Illinois in 1854 passed some resolutions, as their platform. He makes this charge boldly at Ottawa, and now at Freeport they prove that the ones he read are base forgeries, never having been passed by the Republicans. He is compelled by public invitation in all parties to withdraw these forgery charges. He does so, and basely charges Major Harris as the perpetrator.

Again: he asserts that in 1854-56 he was in favor of " squatter sovereignty," and said so on a thousand stumps — real squatter sovereignty, that is, that the people of Illinois might drive slavery out at any time. Now Lincoln is prepared by one of Douglas's printed speeches to prove that Douglas was the other way. In short, that he wilfully lied. So it goes. While Douglas enunciates " lie, lie, blackguards," etc., they are demonstrating to vast crowds by the record that he is a good liar and a forger. The whole State is up in arms, politically so, I mean. Excitement rolls and chafes; it really foams. Believe me, Douglas is losing ground every day. As Douglas sinks, Lincoln rises. We are getting along grandly. Douglas is " sorter " cowed.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

By this time Mr. Parker had read reports of the speeches made in the debate at Ottawa, and was frankly disappointed that Lincoln did not face the questions as stated in the resolutions,

whether forged or not. Even with Herndon's political map of Illinois before him, he seemed not to grasp the dilemma in which Lincoln was placed by having to avoid the Abolition position on the one side, while not permitting Douglas to force him to disavow his repugnance to slavery on the other. Nor did he understand that Lincoln, so far from being an Abolitionist, had no inclination to interfere with slavery in the States where it existed, but was only seeking to check the spread of it. Mr. Parker wrote, once more paying his respects to Greeley:

Boston, Mass., Sept. 9, 1858.

Hon. Mr. Herndon.

My Dear Sir:—Many thanks for your two very interesting and instructive letters. You make the case quite clear. I look with intense interest on the contest now raging in Illinois. There is but one great question before the people: Shall we admit Slavery as a principle and found a Democracy, or Freedom as a principle and found a Despotism? This question comes up in many forms, and men take sides on it. The great mass of people but poorly see the question; their leaders are often knaves and often fools. But

Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

I make no doubt Douglas will be beaten. I thought so in 1854, and looked on him then as a ruined man. What you told me last spring has all come to pass. I am glad Trumbull has demonstrated what you name. I thought it could be done. But in the Ottawa meeting, to judge from the *Tribune* report, I thought Douglas had the best of it. He questioned Mr. Lincoln on the great matters of Slavery, and put the most radical questions, which go to the heart of the question, before the people. Mr. Lincoln did not meet the issue. He made a technical evasion; "he had nothing to do with the resolutions in question." Suppose he had not, admit they were forged. Still they were the vital questions pertinent to the issue, and Lincoln dodged them. That is not the way to fight the battle of freedom.

You say right — that an attempt is making to lower the Republican platform. Depend upon it, this effort will ruin the party. It ruined the Whigs in 1840 to 1848. Daniel Webster stood on higher anti-slavery ground than Abraham Lincoln now. Greeley's conduct, I think, is base. I had never any confidence in him. He has no talent for a

leader. If the Republicans sacrifice their principles for success, they will not be lifted up, but blown up. I trust Lincoln will conquer. It is an admirable education for the masses, this fight. Yours truly,

THEODORE PARKER.

Aside from the honest conservatism of Lincoln, there was still another reason, hints of which Mr. Herndon gave in his reply, for his caution. The Dred Scott decision which permitted the holding of slaves in every Territory, and by inference in every State, had alarmed the North. That was the point where all the anti-slavery sentiment of the North came together, and Lincoln was wise in pressing it, which he did to the utter discomfiture of his opponent. Mr. Herndon wrote in reply:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 11, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—I this moment landed at home, having been up in Christian County addressing her people on the terrible issues of the day. This fact will account, I hope, for delay. I wholly agree with you about Greeley, but dared not say so before you. He is, I think, honest, but a great special fool. He wants a guide to his brain; he is, as you say, full of whims and crochets, writing up absurdities; and on no one principle is he a greater ninny than on the subject of "national political economy." Here he is behind the age — here he loses sight of principle, which blazes all around him. He struggles for liberty, but refuses, absurdly so, to follow it to its just practical results. He is a good man, but he does not see the force or logic of principle — does not see far ahead.

By the by, Greeley has done us infinite harm here in Illinois, and is still doing so; he is "sorter, sorter"— is this way and that — is no way, and this course injures us here very much. *He and Douglas have an arrangement*, which I will explain to you soon, as is charged and as I understand it. You remember what I told you about Greeley and Douglas; that is, what they mutually told me when on my trip East. We are getting very warm here — boiling, and the Republican cause is gaining every day. I send you a "leaf" of Lincoln's speech made in this city some time since. This will explain our difficulties.

Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

Instead of being weak in the knees, as Douglas had predicted he would be, when they arrived in Egypt, Lincoln seemed to be very much at home; for he had grown up in that region, and knew the people better than Douglas did. Not only so; owing to the activity of United States Marshal Dougherty, a nominee on the Buchanan ticket, the vicinity of Jonesboro, where the third debate was to be held, was even more hostile to Douglas than to Lincoln. Evidently Egypt had been smitten with a plague, for the meeting at Jonesboro on September 15th was as poorly attended as it was chary of applause; and both speakers had to make bricks without straw. Douglas opened the debate by a wild and rabid appeal to partisan passion, reiterating all his stock arguments, renewing his charge of a corrupt bargain between Lincoln and Trumbull — quoting an alleged statement of Matheny in proof — and accusing his opponent of changing the color of his speeches, which, he said, were jet-black in the north, a decent mulatto in the center, and almost white in the southern part of the State. Lincoln brushed these lesser matters aside briefly, and attacked what had come to be known as "the Freeport doctrine" of Douglas, which affirmed that, despite the decision of the Supreme Court, slavery could not exist without "friendly local legislation and appropriate police regulations." He did, however, beg leave to doubt the authenticity of the Matheny statement, in view of the Ottawa episode. After analyzing the answer made by Douglas at Freeport, he added another question to his list:

> I hold that the proposition that slavery cannot enter a new Territory without police regulations is historically false. . . . The history of this country shows that the institution of slavery was originally planted upon this continent *without* these "police regulations" which Judge Douglas now thinks necessary for the actual establishment of it. Not only so, but there is another fact — how came the Dred Scott decision to be made? It was made upon the case of a negro being taken and actually held in slavery in Minnesota Territory, claiming his freedom because the act of Congress prohibited his being so held there. Will the Judge

pretend that Dred Scott was not held there without police regulations? . . . This shows that there is vigor enough in slavery to plant itself in a new country even against unfriendly legislation. It takes not only law but the enforcement of law to keep it out. . . . If you were elected members of the Legislature, what would be the first thing you would have to do before entering upon your duties? Swear to support the Constitution of the United States. Suppose you believe, as Judge Douglas does, that the Constitution of the United States guarantees to your neighbor the right to hold slaves in that Territory — that they are his property — how can you clear your oaths unless you give him such legislation as is necessary to enable him to enjoy that property? . . . And what I say here will hold with still more force against the Judge's doctrine of " unfriendly legislation." How could you, having sworn to support the Constitution, and believing it guaranteed the right to hold slaves in the Territories, assist in legislation intended to defeat that right? . . . Not only so, but if you were to do so, how long would it take the courts to hold your votes unconstitutional and void? Not a moment. . . . Here I propose to give the Judge my fifth interrogatory, which he may take and answer at his leisure:

If the slaveholding citizens of a United States Territory should need and demand Congressional legislation for the protection of their slave property in such Territory, would you, as a member of Congress, vote for or against such legislation?

" Will you repeat that? " said Douglas. " I want to answer that question."

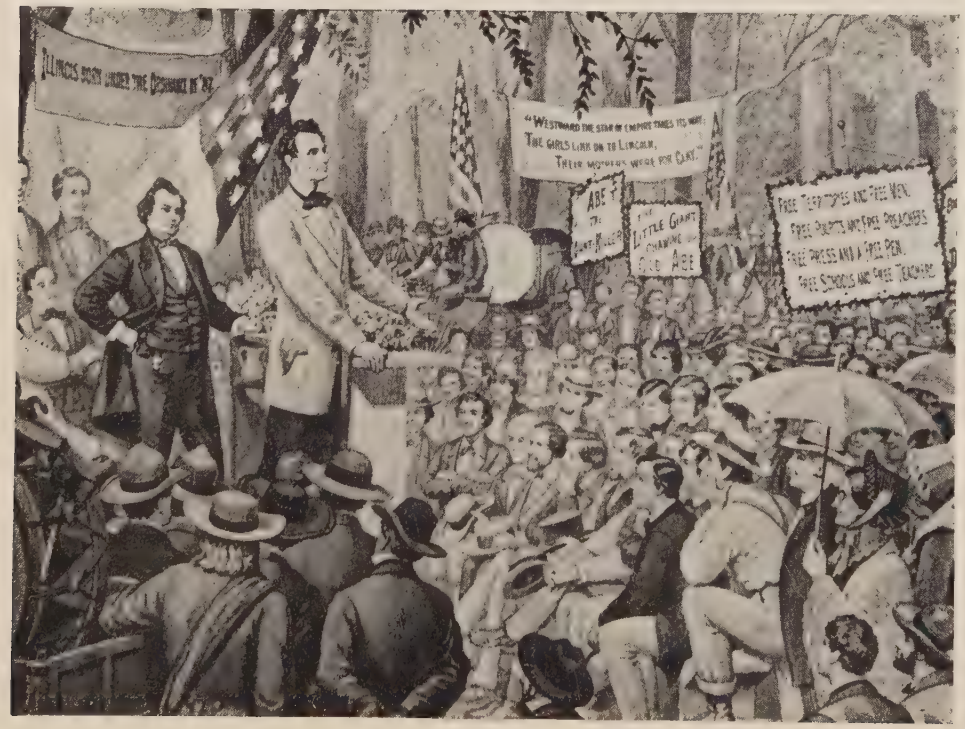
Lincoln repeated it, but Douglas, instead of answering it, dodged it by taking refuge in his favorite dogma to which Lincoln was wont to refer satirically, mimicking the manner of Douglas, as " the *gur-reat pur-rinciple* of popular sovereignty." At the close of his speech Lincoln was really angry, when, by a strange lapse, he descended to make note of a playful remark uttered by Douglas at Joliet, to the effect that when at Ottawa he had threatened to " trot Lincoln down into Egypt," the latter became so weak that he had to be carried from the platform — referring to the incident at Ottawa when two young farmers took Lincoln upon their shoulders

and carried him in triumph from the scene, while five thousand people joined in the ovation. After dwelling upon the remark of Douglas, he finally said: "I don't want to quarrel with him — to call him a liar — but when I come square up to him I don't know what else to call him, if I must tell the truth out."

On their way to the next debate, both men paused to visit the State Fair, then in full blast at Centralia, and curious crowds followed the rivals through the grounds, deeming them more attractive than the exhibits. Fifteen thousand people assembled at Charleston to hear the discussion on September 18th. Again there were long processions with bands and banners, the women taking part in behalf of Lincoln. Thirty-two girls, representing the thirty-two States, rode in a long, decorated wagon on which was inscribed:

> The girls link on to Lincoln,
> As their mothers linked to Clay!

So far Lincoln had been content to deny the charge that he was advocating the political and social equality of negroes and whites, and while there may have been some variation of emphasis in different parts of the State his position was consistent and clear. He held that the authors of the Declaration of Independence intended to include all men as equal, not in all respects — in color, size, moral development, or social capacity — but only equal in certain inalienable rights. While he did not affirm that the negro was his equal in moral or intellectual endowment, he insisted that in the right to eat the bread which his own hands had earned, without the leave of anybody else, the black man was his equal, the equal of Senator Douglas, and the equal of any living man. Nor could he be held to account for any other position, except by some "specious and fantastic arrangement of words by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse." But in the hotel at Charleston some one had asked him about this matter, and in opening the debate he stated his position in a manner which grated upon the feelings of some anti-slavery


"WESTWARD THE STAR OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY;
THE GIRLS LIKE OLD TO LINCOLN,
THEIR MOTHERS VOTE FOR CLAY."
ABE
LITTLE GIANT
AND ABE
FREE TERRITORIES AND FREE MEN,
FREE RIGHTS AND FREE PREACHERS
FREE PRESS AND A FREE PEN,
FREE SCHOOLS AND FREE TEACHERS

A Scene from the Charleston Debate

[*By courtesy of Sarah E. Raymond FitzWilliam*]

men, as betraying too much of the spirit of caste and too much prejudice against color.[1]

> I will say that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people. . . . There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. . . . I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro must be denied everything. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I can just let her alone. . . . I have never had the least apprehension that I or my friends would marry negroes if there was no law to keep them from it; but as Judge Douglas and his friends seem to be in great apprehension that they might, if there were no law to keep them from it, I give him the most solemn pledge that I will to the very last stand by the law of this State, which forbids the marrying of white people with negroes.
>
> And in his rejoinder he added: I am not in favor of negro citizenship. My opinion is that the different States have the power to make a negro a citizen under the Constitution if they choose. The Dred Scott decision decides that they have not the power. If the State of Illinois had that power I should be opposed to the exercise of it. That is all I have to say about it.

At the beginning of the contest Senator Trumbull had charged that Douglas had besmirched himself in connection with the Toombs Bill, helping to strike from it the provision permitting the people of Kansas to submit the constitution to a vote. Douglas denied that the bill contained any such provision, and branded Trumbull as a liar. Lincoln, more ag-

[1] *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power,* by Henry Wilson, Vol. II, p. 576 (1872).

gressive than he had been before, now took it up and resented such gross attacks upon Senator Trumbull. He reviewed the devious course of the Toombs infamy and proved, by unquestionable evidence, that it did embody such a provision, and thus, if not convicting Douglas of the original offence, proved that he had stated an untruth in the matter. The charge of conspiracy, hitherto vague and shadowy, became definite and effective, and Lincoln suggested to Douglas that " it will not avail him at all that he swells himself up, takes on dignity, and calls people liars." Douglas was furious, as he had reason to be under such a charge, which meant that while proclaiming " popular sovereignty " he was plotting to overthrow it.

Both men were angry, and blows fell thick and fast. In retaliating Douglas revived the old yarn that Lincoln, while in Congress, had voted against furnishing supplies to the army during the Mexican War. Whereupon, Lincoln seized O. B. Ficklin, a Democrat who had been in Congress with him in the forties, and who personally knew that Douglas " lied," leading the man forward as a witness with such muscular force that he could not resist. Ficklin afterward said that Lincoln shook all the Democracy out of him that day. Though neither charge has any value for us, Lincoln believed that Douglas did help to concoct the Toombs Bill, and so thorough was his circumstantial demonstration that he said that his opponent might as well call Euclid a liar. Both friend and foe were glad when time was called upon Lincoln, for all felt that Douglas had had enough, and that it was time to let up on him.[1]

[1] According to I. N. Arnold, Douglas could not keep his seat, but walked rapidly up and down the platform, watch in hand, obviously impatient for the call of " time." The instant the second hand reached the point, he called out: " Sit down, Lincoln, sit down. Your time is up." Turning to Douglas, Lincoln said: " I will. I will *quit*. My time *is* up." — *Life of Lincoln*, p. 148 (1884). But Horace White, who was present, remembers no such incident. And, though Douglas was doubtless glad when " time " was called, he was too wily a man to display such restiveness, even if he felt it. But it is true that on that day he was taught a lesson, as no doubt Lincoln regretted his exhibition of ire.

II

At last Mr. Herndon "let the cat out of the bag" and told the secret, of which he had hinted in his former letter, which explained the course of Lincoln in the contest. Incidentally, in replying to what Mr. Parker had said about Seward for the Presidency, he shows that so far the friends of Lincoln had not thought of their leader for that high office. He also makes clear, what had been a puzzle to Parker, what was meant by "looking Douglas in the eye," and the efficiency of that method of worming secrets out of an opponent. Exactly how far this scheme went is uncertain, but Herndon believed, and so did Lincoln, that it extended to a definite bargain:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 20, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Dear Sir:—I came home on this day and found yours of the 9th inst., at my residence. I am much obliged to you. I was afraid in my hurry that I did not make plain what I wanted to say. There is one thing I forgot to answer in your former letter, and that was this: "Seward will be our next candidate for the Presidency." This was your opinion, but let me say, I doubt it. There is something in the wind, the full idea of which I do not gather. My opinion is that to get the Know-Nothings, North as well as South, our Republican platform will be lowered so low that Seward will not stand on it, or if he would he is not the man to suck to himself all the floating materials on the great sea of politics. Look out for cowardly expediency! Watch! I admit with you that if Seward is the candidate and is elected that the iron wedge is then ready, and will be driven, so that as the things split the fibers along the lines of the crack will sing from the intensity of the blow. Friend, form no loved theory just now: men are cruel, and politicians are cowards, crucifying God in their base cowardice, as they go onward.

I have often said to you that Greeley has done us *infinite* harm in this State, and now let me explain. First, Greeley, Seward, Weed, and Douglas, by accident or otherwise, met in Chicago in the month of October, 1857, and soon afterward it was announced to me *officially,* but *privately,* that Senator Douglas was a Republican. I did not see these

men in Chicago, though I believe they were so informed. This is the substance of the Chicago contract. Douglas said to Greeley, etc., "*You support me for the Senate, and I will support Seward for the Presidency, and take my chance for the office in time.*" "*Agreed,*" said the crowd. The New Yorkers went eastward, and Douglas stayed at home, insinuating that he was a Republican, etc. It somehow turned up that Judge Trumbull was told of this; but he rebelled, his friend Lincoln not having been consulted in the trade; and so the matter fell to the ground. This accounts for Douglas's savage attacks against Lecompton. Greeley found out that he could not rule us — could not turn us over to Douglas; and so the bargain was null and void; and so this accounts for Douglas's later pro-slavery tendencies. So wags this great political world. This, too, accounts for Greeley's support of Douglas, Haskin, etc., at first, and now his cold and cowardly advocacy of Lincoln. Here then is the whole matter as I can get it. There is yet, *do not forget,* an agreement to lower the Republican flag, so that all gray-headed, cowardly, sniveling, conservatives, North as well as South, may gather upon a degraded plank. I say; look out!

I hold in my hand a letter from a certain Senator of the United States — good heavens, would you believe it! — acknowledging something, substantially, which amounts to a partial confession of the Douglas-Lincoln phase of things. I cannot state all — it's private. I told you once, if not oftener, that if I could *look Douglas in the eye* I could tell what was going on. Doubtless you thought I was foolish. I did so and told you all I dared, when in Boston. There is a peculiar *tie* which binds men together, who have drank "bouts" together. So with Douglas and my humble self. I am hard to fool, friend, by man. I can read him about as well as he knows himself. Excuse this arrogance. I brought this news to our town and it astonished Lincoln and our boys, and thunderstruck the Chicago *Tribune,* etc. One of my reasons for being in Boston may now be accounted for. Do you understand? Will finish in next.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Whether or not the agreement here referred to took the shape of an actual bargain, this letter illumines the whole campaign, so far as Lincoln, Trumbull, and the Illinois Republicans were concerned, and helps us to understand it as

never before. Be it noted that the date of this meeting in Chicago, October, 1857, was two months before the revolt of Douglas against the Lecompton fraud, and, as Herndon, Lincoln, and Koerner believed, inspired that revolt. This explains, among many other things, the dickerings of Douglas for Republican support, his sending documents to Herndon and others. It makes clear the action of the Republican State convention in giving Lincoln a direct, specific, and unqualified nomination, and gives the key to his speech of acceptance. It explains the apathy of Greeley, his "mean speech," to which Mr. Parker referred, his lack of enthusiasm for Lincoln, and his pleas to Herndon for Harris. It accounts for the prophecy of Douglas in his Chicago speech, that the Republicans would come over to his side, and his anger and bitter denunciation when they refused to come; his contemptuous belittlement of Lincoln and his friends, his charge of a corrupt bargain between Lincoln and Trumbull, his effort to brand them as Abolitionists, his later pro-slavery tendencies — and, indeed, his devious movements during the whole campaign. It is a most illuminating and valuable letter, and so Mr. Parker regarded it.

Boston, Mass., Sept. 23, 1858.

Hon. Mr. Herndon.

My Dear Sir: — Your last letter, just come to hand, is quite important. I shall keep it confidential, but consider the intelligence, and "govern myself accordingly." That "accidental" meeting in Chicago is quite remarkable, and explains many things which seemed *queer* before. Last spring you told me much which was new, and foretold what has since happened. I did not understand till now, after reading your last letter, how you could tell what Douglas was after by looking in his eye; now it is clear enough. There is a freemasonry in drinking. I long since lost all confidence in Greeley, both as a representative of a moral principle, and as the adviser of expedient measures. His course in regard to Douglas last winter was inexplicable until now.

We must not lower the Republican platform. Let the Know-Nothings go to their own place; we must adhere to the principle of Right! I go for Seward as the ablest and

best representative of the Democratic idea, that could now get the nomination. My next choice would be Chase. I put Seward first, because oldest and longest in the field — perhaps, also, the abler. But if Douglas is defeated, if Trumbull is re-elected in 1860, I think he would be quite as likely to get the nomination.

Massachusetts is likely to send a stronger anti-slavery delegation to Congress than ever before. Some of the Know-Nothings will be discharged (others ought to be). C. F. Adams, J. B. Alley, T. D. Eliot, and George Boutwell, are likely to be members of the next House of Representatives. Governor Banks would, no doubt, lower the Republican platform, if that operation would help him up. But Massachusetts will oppose any such act, and so will the people of the North. If we put up a spoony we shall lose the battle, lose honor, and be demoralized. Edward Everett is beating every New England bush for votes to elect him! He may beat till the cows come home, and get little for his labor.

What you write about, the letter from the Eastern Senator, chagrins me a good deal. But I am sure of this: if the attempt is made by the Republican leaders to lower the platform, then they are beaten in 1860, and are ruined as completely as I think Douglas now is. Greeley says he would admit new Slave States. I despise such miserable cowardice, all the more in such a man.

Truly yours, THEODORE PARKER.

As yet the name of Lincoln does not figure among Presidential possibilities with Mr. Parker, though Trumbull's does; nor does Herndon mention it. Writing after the fact in later years, Mr. Herndon and others intimate that they foresaw Lincoln for President and worked to that end, but these letters tell another story; though, as has been said, Herndon was not surprised when his partner was mentioned for supreme leadership. In replying to Mr. Parker, he flays Greeley without mercy, giving us at the same time a glimpse of the influence of the *Tribune* and its opportunity to damage Lincoln:

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 25, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — In my last letter of the 20th inst., I was detailing, or trying to do so, how Greeley hurt us in Illi-

nois. You know what I said. Well, secondly, we were like innocent fools waiting out here to hear Greeley open in his great *Tribune*: we expected that he would open the ball, but no signal boom came, and we grew restively cold, and our party slumbered as with a chill — a bivouac of death upon an iceberg, until we waked and shook off the frost and gathered up our mantles, staffs, and flags; and now, without Greeley, and *in spite of Greeley*, we are daily conquering a victory by our own energy and power, and if you will, eloquence. Greeley's treachery or indifference came near killing us — defeating us in Illinois. So much for the treacherous or indifferent conduct of a great leader, and supposed friend. It all now seems strange and mysterious; but the facts are before us, and from which there is no escape. Greeley was daily playing into the hands of the pro-slavery camp. Had Douglas been elected — had we not organized the Republican forces in Illinois this year, we should have been disorganized in 1860, and thrown into the great traitor's arms — Douglas's arms; and he would have sold us to the Charleston convention in 1860; or if he could not we would have been powerless because disorganized. The whole people of the United States may thank us in Illinois for our instincts. This will appear in due time; and your *Yankee traders* will be ashamed of themselves. I mean no disrespect to you. You are true.

Again: you perceive that Greeley *is already lowering the Republican flag*; we are not free from his influence yet. When Greeley made that mean and miserable speech of which you speak, it came out to Illinois, and we had to follow suit — were compelled to follow him. Why, the pro-slavery dogs would say — did say — that we Republicans were more fanatical, more abolition, than Greeley; and thus you see the downward tendencies of things, and now you have the cause of Lincoln's backdown, and *Greeley is the author*, the cause of the downward slide. That speech of Greeley's and his cowardly editorials will reach throughout the whole North, and East, and Northwest. Mark it. This is a great wide treachery, but it is done and it cannot be helped. I wrote an article for Greeley's paper, notifying the world what was coming, but he refused to publish it. So I did to one of your Boston papers, and it was there refused, and so I came to the conclusion that this treachery was firmly fixed, wide-spread, and universal; and so I quit writing except in Illinois. Here then is the cause of our

wrongs, and Greeley and others are the authors, in *my* opinion. I agree with you that Greeley's conduct is most base, foul and damnable. What can we do? That is the question. Anything which you may suggest to me I will try to profit by. What shall be done? How shall we act? That is the question.

When you come fully to understand our position — Lincoln's position — and remember Greeley's whole conduct, speech and editorials, and remember the *Tribune's* influence, its wide-spread and almost universal circulation, you *will* look over our heads and somewhat *scorn the real traitor*. I hope you now understand our condition, feelings, position, etc. We are gaining every day in Illinois. All looks bright. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Others have described the scenes of the great debates, but no one has told of the little meetings at cross-road schoolhouses, where "the big bugs" did not go, as Mr. Herndon does in his next letter. Those who have had a part in the conduct of such a campaign know that such places, far off the highways of the world, are hardly less important, in a close contest, than the larger centers. Nor has any one ever described the seething, tumbling, boiling excitement of that autumn — no one else could describe it — as Mr. Herndon has done. Hear him:

Springfield, Ill., October 3, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I arrived home this minute off a political "tramp," and find yours of the 22d ult. I am happy to give you new items or old ones, if they will only give you proofs of our instincts. What I state to you, you may "swear by," for I only state what I *know* to be true; and what I have hitherto stated, I know as well as that you are born. I know what I am talking and to whom, and so keep within bounds.

I have lately been in and through Sangamon, Logan, Menard, Christian, Macoupin, and Macon counties — an area as large as the State of Massachusetts, and all things are afire — look right and feel strong and vital. Peter, the hermit, is abroad, shaking our State. I am of your opinion that we have Senator Douglas "on the hip," and if we are not fooled he is "a dead cock in the pit." Here is one of

the best signs that I have felt yet: namely, the honest countrymen are, as we say here, "dumfounded,"— they do not know what to do about Douglas, his opinions, his veracity, his whole being, and throughout all its phases. They say nothing — keep still, for the Democracy is a kind of political popery, hunting out heresy and burning the heretic. I predict that the Democracy will be badly fooled in their men, their numbers, and their turn-out. The farmers keep "shy:" they do not want to be hunted up and damned, and so they simply say they are Democratic. I know, however, they are not, for I am all the time at the school-houses and village churches where good can be done and where the "big bugs" do not go. There are no great crowds at these cross-road places, yet they are really the places where good can be done. Those men who will go twenty miles through heat and dust to hear speeches are Democratic or Republican; but those who will not go twenty rods to hear speeches are neither one way nor the other; but if you go to them, and erect a " stump," or goods-box right at their door, then you get them to hear, and convert many. This is my experience. I think it is the experience of others.

Our people, the Republicans, old-line Whigs, and Fillmore men, are united closely, and are wise and wide-awake, doing man and God good service. This class of men, Republicans in all except name, is rapidly increasing, developing into zealous, fiery, logical Republicans. This is so north and south, east and west, through the whole of the State. Our general ticket will be elected by thirty or forty thousand. The Buchanan men — party — are rapidly increasing. I love to see this, if I could only throw out of view the motive that actuates them — office. They are running candidates in every Congressional district — in every State Senatorial district, and in *every place where any body is a candidate for anything*: they thus divide and split "wide open" the despotism that is threatening to grind us to powder.

The Douglas party, on the other hand, are daily decreasing, caving in, and giving up the ghost. I call this faction led on by Douglas, a mob; it is composed mostly of Irish — whiskey settlers — the ignorant and debased of the whole world. The party is sinking — bound to sink and go under, and thank the people for it; thank God for it. I did Lincoln and Greeley a little wrong, probably, by the

generality of my expressions — I say Lincoln's *apparent* "backdown," and Greeley's accidental advocacy of the pro-slavery side. Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

Again Herndon turns upon Greeley; again he recurs to the letter from the United States Senator — Henry Wilson, we may guess—which, from his account of it, must have let light clear through the bargain between Greeley and Douglas, and the plot to lower the party ideal. And once again he refers to the matter of Presidential possibilities without any intimation as to Lincoln. The letter tingles with enthusiasm, indignation, and hope:

Springfield, Ill., October 4, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—In my hurry, whilst writing my last letter, I failed to meet, by answer, the whole of your letter. 1st, I wrote to you about a certain United States Senator, and you say that hint, that man chagrins you. I am sorry for this, but I cannot help it. However, I promise you that ere long you shall have the man's name, if it is not too great a breach of confidence. I will think about it, ask my friends what to do. I state nothing but facts that I *know*.

Secondly, you say you are, 1st, for Seward; 2nd, for Chase, and 3rd, for Senator Trumbull, if, etc.; and in answer to this, I say "we of the West have no choice — we do not care who it is, so that he is a good Republican, one whose Republicanism is bottomed and buttressed on ideas — on the great underlying principles of justice, right, and the inalienable liberties of man: we do not want any Republican who is a Republican from simple policy, working upward through ambition." This is our speech to you — to all the world, East as well as West, North as well as South; and he who expects to get our votes must platform himself upon the Declaration of Independence, Justice, and the inalienable rights and duties of man, guided and governed by the spirit of '76. If he do not stand here at least in feeling, he need not look westward, unless the East and middle Union tie our hands, and stop the beating of our hearts. We intend to climb as high as we can along the lines of absolute justice. This is our feeling now. What it may be in 1860 I cannot tell, but only hope.

Greeley is acting a great dog, is he not? Just look at the power of his great paper, with its world-wide circula-

tion, and does he state who he is for, what he wants, what Illinois is doing, what freedom is struggling for, and how, with intensity, etc.? Nothing of the kind. He does not seem to know there is such a man as Lincoln, such a struggle as 1858-9, and such a State as Illinois. Does he keep his own people "posted?" Who would know by Greeley's paper that a great race for weal or woe was being fought all over the wide prairies of Illinois? Who would? It is strange indeed!

We are gaining in numbers, strength, power, and enthusiasm, every hour, day and week. Douglas is losing just in the same proportion, ratio or what not. I saw Mr. Richard Yates, a former Congressman from this district, a day or so ago, and he says that Douglas looks gloomy, mournful, in despair — Yates having ridden with Douglas in the cars from Danville to the center of the State; and I state to you the same thing, and in addition thereto I say Douglas is bloated as I ever saw him; he drinks very hard indeed; his look is awful to me, when I compare him as he now looks with what he was in February, 1858. What you cannot understand or read herein, guess at.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Herndon was not the man to write in this manner about Greeley to another and neglect to say the same thing to Greeley himself. Evidently he had been giving the editor of the New York *Tribune* a piece of his mind for his indifference to Lincoln and the Illinois contest. Not otherwise can we explain the following letter in which, by implication at least, all that Herndon had heard and charged against Greeley was strikingly confirmed:

New York, N. Y., October 6, 1858.

W. H. Herndon, Esq.

My Dear Sir: — It seems to me that my name ought not to be used to distract and disorganize the Republicans of your State. My personal conviction is that Col. Harris and Mr. Morris are two as clear-seeing, reliable, conscientious men on the slavery question as need be sent to Congress, and that it is a public misfortune that they are not recognized and supported as such. I do not wish to deny you to qualify this belief. The case is different with regard to Senator Douglas, who, *in his present position* I could not,

of course, support, but he *need not have been in this position* had the Republicans of Illinois been as wise and far-seeing as they are earnest and true. I shall not disguise my regret that the Republicans of your and the Quincy district did not see fit to support Messrs. Morris and Harris. I think they might have done so without a sacrifice either of principle or policy; but, seeing that things are as they are, I would not wish to be quoted as authority for making trouble and division among our friends.

Yours, HORACE GREELEY.

III

Such a campaign was enough to tire a man of iron, and even Douglas, famed for his endurance, was beginning to fag. Though he made much the same speech everywhere, as Lincoln reminded him, to repeat which required no great intellectual exertion, yet it was no holiday to travel constantly, even in a private car, and speak almost every day for three months. No doubt, an excessive conviviality, to which he was tempted, added to his nervous irritability, noted by so many observers; and a turn of sentiment had made the outcome of the contest uncertain. Then, too, the campaign was draining not only his strength but his purse, forcing him to spend what was left from the sale of his real estate in Chicago, and to mortgage his other holdings, leaving his estate encumbered for more than $90,000.[1] Naturally he was not very amiable under these circumstances.

Added to all this was the bitter, underhanded, unscrupulous fight made upon him by the Buchanan faction of his own party, the full force of which he was made to feel during the closing weeks of the campaign. Even in the joint debates, especially at Quincy and at Alton, he paid his respects to "the contemptible crew" who were trying to break up the party and defeat him. Of course he charged that his opponent was in collusion with the Lecomptonites, seeking to accomplish his overthrow and ruin. But Lincoln, while he denied any such intrigue, did not disguise his satisfaction that the Democrats

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, pp. 382-3 (1908).

were fighting among themselves, and smiled when he said, "Go it, husband! Go it, bear!" Douglas had a right to complain of the methods of his enemies in his own camp. Senator Slidell of Louisiana was in Illinois, spending money, and secretly circulating canards to the effect that Douglas owned slaves and mistreated them in a disgraceful and inhuman fashion. This tale was denied by Slidell, but not until after the election when the lie had done its worst.

When the rivals met at Galesburg, on October 7th, each was disposed to stick to his respective text, leaving personalities out of account. But Lincoln could not forget that Douglas had promised to investigate those spurious resolutions quoted at Ottawa and retracted at Freeport. Since then the Senator had been in Springfield, and Lincoln thought it was time for him to make a report of his research. But, as the fraud had served to catch votes, he suspected that his opponent was like the fisherman's wife, who, when her drowned husband was brought home with his body full of eels, said, "*Take the eels out of him and set him again.*" He denied that he was advocating social equality among whites and blacks, but he knew that it was of no avail, for, as he had said before, he had "no way of making an argument up into the consistency of a corncob and stopping his mouth with it." Knox County was Lincoln ground, and this fact not only put him in good mood, but drew from him some of the rarest gems of eloquence heard during the debates. To the charge that the Republican party was sectional he made a most impressive and prophetic reply, and then passed to the fundamental issue of the campaign. He reminded Senator Douglas that he himself was fast becoming sectional, and that "his speeches would not go as current now south of the Ohio River" as they had formerly gone there — a fact which the Senator discovered to his grief when, after the election, he journeyed southward.[1]

> If he has not thought of this, I commend to his consideration the evidence in his own declaration, on this day, of his becoming sectional too. I see it rapidly approaching.

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas,* by Allen Johnson, pp. 393-4 (1909).

> Whatever may be the result of this ephemeral contest between Judge Douglas and myself, I see the day rapidly approaching when his pill of sectionalism, which he has been thrusting down the throats of Republicans for years past, will be crowded down his own throat. . . . Every thing that emanates from him or his coadjutors in their course of policy, carefully excludes the thought that there is anything wrong in slavery. . . . If you will take the Judge's speeches, and select the short and pointed sentences expressed by him — as his declaration that he " don't care whether slavery is voted up or down"— you will see at once that this is perfectly logical, if you do not admit that slavery is wrong. . . . He insists that, upon the score of equality, the owners of slaves and owners of property — of horses and every other sort of property — should be alike and hold them alike in a new Territory. That is perfectly logical, if the two species of property are alike and are equally founded in right. But if you admit that one of them is wrong, you cannot institute any equality between right and wrong. And from this difference of sentiment . . . arises the real difference between Judge Douglas and his friends on the one hand, and the Republicans on the other.

Carl Schurz, then stumping the State for Lincoln, heard the debate at Quincy, on October 13th, and his description of the scene leaves nothing to be added.[1] He found Lincoln calm, cool, and apparently as fresh as ever, good-humored, friendly, and shrewdly logical, while Douglas, harsh and broken of voice, gave unmistakable signs of nervous irritability, induced by physical fatigue. Douglas referred angrily to the "gross personalities and base insinuations" of Lincoln, whom he persistently called an Abolitionist. As to restraining the spread of slavery, he said that it was the policy of his adversary to "hem them in until starvation seizes them, and by starving them to death, he will put slavery in the course of ultimate extinction;" a silly argument, if such it may be called, made with a sneer that was half a hiss. Lincoln again pressed the sharp point that slavery was "a moral, a social, and a political wrong," which " the leading man — I think I

[1] *Reminiscences*, by Carl Schurz, Vol. II, pp. 89-96 (1909).

may do my friend Judge Douglas the honor of calling him such — advocating the present Democratic policy, never himself says is wrong.'' So forcefully did he emphasize this aspect of the case that Douglas winced and scowled under the implied moral obtuseness. Lincoln went on:

> I will add this, that if there be any man who does not believe that slavery is wrong . . . that man is misplaced, and ought to leave us. While, on the other hand, if there be any man in the Republican party who is impatient over the necessity springing from its actual presence, and is impatient of the constitutional guaranties thrown around it, and would act in disregard of these, he too is misplaced, standing with us. He will find his place somewhere else; for we have a due regard, so far as we are capable of understanding them, for all these things. This, gentlemen, as well as I can give it, is a plain statement of our principles in all their enormity.

One of the chief assets of Douglas in the latter part of the campaign was the presence of his beautiful wife, whose grace, tact, and charm did much to smooth out the ruffles made by his rude vigor. She held receptions, largely attended by ladies, at the various places where he spoke, but there were also crowds of admiring gentlemen, and her exquisite diplomacy was a source of worry to the Republicans. Charles Bernays, editor of the St. Louis *Anzeiger*, and a strong Republican, upon being introduced to the lady Senator was so captivated that he actually turned Democrat and advocated the election of Douglas. Thereafter the *Anzeiger* was a Douglas organ,[1] and it is no wonder that Lincoln and his friends were fearful of a power which logic could not resist.

From Quincy the leaders went by boat to Alton, where Lincoln was joined by his wife who had come quietly down from Springfield to hear the last of the debates. Gustave Koerner found him in the sitting room of the hotel, in a somewhat despondent mood. He at once said, ''Let us go and see Mary,'' whom Koerner had met years before at a party in Lexington, Kentucky, when she was Mary Todd. ''Now, tell Mary what

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, p. 66.

you think of our chances," continued Lincoln; "she is rather dispirited." Koerner assured her that Lincoln would carry the State, and he was reasonably sure of the Legislature. Together they talked of the outlook, regretting, especially, the stand taken by Frank Blair, who was on his way from St. Louis with a boat full of Missouri Free-Soilers to cheer for Douglas. By this time an enthusiastic crowd, who had found out where Lincoln was, had surrounded the hotel; and their talk was at an end. They went without parade or fuss to the public square, where the debate was to be held. There Koerner met Douglas, whom he had not seen since 1856, and was greatly shocked by his appearance. His face was bronzed, bloated, and haggard, and his voice was so heavy and hoarse that he seemed at times to be barking.[1]

Despite his bad voice, Douglas opened the debate with one of the ablest speeches he had made during the entire canvass, winning sympathy for himself in his fight against the Lecompton fraud; quoting Jefferson Davis to confirm that he was in accord with the South; conjuring with the name of Henry Clay, as a bid for old Whig votes; and, happily, omitting many of his stale misrepresentations of his opponent. As a bait for the large German vote, he insisted that the equality referred to in the Declaration of Independence, was the equality of white men, especially "men of European birth and descent." While prodding Lincoln for his evasive answer as to whether he would admit a new Slave State, he did not forget the enemies in his own camp, which was a house divided against itself. In closing he sought to summarize the issues, by saying that he looked forward to the time when every State should be allowed to do as it pleased, and that he cared more for this principle than for all the negroes on earth. In reply Lincoln made one of the most incisive speeches of his life, which may be best illustrated by using a few maxim-like arguments, as he called them.

> I want to know if Buchanan has not as much right to be inconsistent as Douglas has? Has Douglas the exclusive

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, Vol. II, p. 67.

right, in this country, of being on all sides of all questions?

Although Henry Clay could say he wished every slave in the United States was in the country of his ancestors, I am denounced by those pretending to respect Clay for uttering a wish that it might some time, in some peaceful way, come to an end.

How many Democrats are there about here who have left Slave States and come to the Free State of Illinois to get rid of the institution of slavery? I reckon there are a thousand to one. If the policy you are now advocating had prevailed when this country was in a Territorial condition, where would they have gone to get rid of it?

The fathers of the government placed the institution where the public mind did rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. Let me ask why they made provision that the source of slavery — the African slave-trade — should be cut off at the end of twenty years? Why did they make provision that in all the new territory we owned at that time, slavery should be forever inhibited, if they did not look to its being placed in the course of ultimate extinction?

I understand the contemporaneous history of those times to be that covert language was used with a purpose, and that purpose was that in our constitution, which it was hoped and is still hoped will endure forever — when it should be read by intelligent and patriotic men, after the institution of slavery had passed from among us — there should be nothing on the fact of the great charter of liberty suggesting that such a thing as negro slavery ever existed among us.

Is it not a false statesmanship that undertakes to build up a system of policy upon the basis of caring nothing about the very thing that everybody does care the most about — a thing which all experience shows we care a great deal about?

I defy any man to make an argument that will justify unfriendly legislation to deprive a slaveholder of his right to hold his slaves in a Territory, that will not equally, in all its length, breadth and thickness, furnish an argument for nullifying the Fugitive Slave Law.

Judge Douglas has been the most prominent instrument in changing the institution of slavery which the fathers of the government expected to come to an end ere this — and putting it upon Brooks's cotton-gin basis — placing it where

> he openly confesses he has no desire there shall ever be an end of it.
>
> That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world.
>
> I was glad to express my gratitude at Quincy, and I re-express it here to Judge Douglas — *that he looks to no end of the institution of slavery.* That will help the people to see where the struggle really is.

After a spirited rejoinder by Douglas, the great debates, matchless in our history for the importance of their subject and the skill of their conduct, came to a close. Whatever may have been the impressions of the hour, the speeches of Lincoln, when read in the calm light of today, far excel those of Douglas in form, in texture, in temper, not less than in spirit and purpose. What strikes one, indeed, is the high art of the orator amidst the heat, hurry, and passion of such a contest. Clear thought is expressed with singular lucidity, each sentence having its special errand, each word its weight, with never either too much or too little. There are glints of wit and touches of humor, but what is borne in upon the reader is the earnestness, the gravity, and at times the almost religious solemnity of the man. He was not merely an office-seeker, still less a mere agitator, but a man who thought justly, loved the truth, and sought to serve his nation and his race. That Lincoln won by his appeal to reason in the forum is shown by the fact that his party published the debates in 1860,[1] while the party of Douglas refused to do so.

IV

But the campaign did not end with the debates. In fact, the joint discussions were only a tithe of what the two leaders did and said during the canvass, both speaking almost every

[1] The edition, published by Follett, Foster & Co., Columbus, Ohio, included the speeches of Lincoln in Ohio, in 1859. The same firm issued the campaign *Life of Lincoln*, by William Dean Howells.

day in the intervals between the debates, and afterward — Douglas still journeying in his special car, with artillery attachment; Lincoln finding rest the best way he could, sometimes curled up on miserable railway seats, wrapped in his shawl. There were, besides, other speakers doing valiant service — Lovejoy, Palmer, Oglesby, Chase of Ohio, Carl Schurz, and especially Senator Trumbull, who was a "political debater, scarcely, if at all, inferior to either Lincoln or Douglas."[1] Amid the intense excitement of the closing days many men shifted their position, and one of the sorrows of Lincoln was the loss of his friend, Judge T. Lyle Dickey, who went over to the enemy. Dickey secured a letter from John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, urging the old line Whigs to vote for Douglas, as a necessary rebuke to Buchanan.[2] This letter was circulated clandestinely and without warning in doubtful districts just on the eve of the election, and before its influence could be counteracted. Other forces, even more disastrous, were at work, as may be seen from the letters of Herndon:

Springfield, Ill., October 26, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I really regret to hear that you are sick and confined to your bed. I hope that you are not very ill — so ill that you cannot soon talk and "yarn" and laugh with your bosom friends. Come, keep in good spirits and be merry. If you were in Illinois and could only see how the great human family is progressing *justicewards, socialwards and religiouswards,* you would thank God and take courage.

The Republicans are full of hope and wild with enthusiasm, all educated and drilled to duty in this great canvass that is now apace approaching. Our forces are eager, well drilled and compact, and are only waiting the word "Go!" Do not understand me to say that all is surely and absolutely safe; but understand this — all looks well, *feels right in our bones.* If we are defeated it will be on this account: there are thousands of wild, roving, robbing, bloated, pock-

[1] *Abraham Lincoln,* by Herndon and Weik, Chap. by Horace White.

[2] *Life of Lincoln,* by W. C. Whitney, pp. 271-3 (1907). The Crittenden letter is there published. Also *Life of Crittenden,* by Coleman, Vol. II, p. 163.

marked Irish, who are thrown in on us by the Douglas Democracy for the purpose of outvoting us — robbing us of our "popular will." If we are defeated there is only one thing that will do it, and that is wrong, fraud, bribery, and corruption. We *know* our men in each precinct, town, county, district, and section, and we have the majority. Enclosed I send you a slip cut from the Chicago *Press and Tribune* showing that there is danger from the causes aforesaid.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

Alas, as with the campaign, so with Theodore Parker, whose life had been a splendid campaign in behalf of private nobility and public justice, it was the beginning of the end: he was smitten with "the great white plague." From his bed he watched the heroic struggle in Illinois, which had now become as desperate as it was heroic. One need not charge Senator Douglas with corruption, but it is not a matter of doubt that his party, determined to rebuke Buchanan and to defeat Lincoln, resorted to fraud. It is true that there had been a panic the year before, and that many men were out of work, but it was no accident that thousands of idle Irish in Philadelphia, New York, St. Louis, and other cities, were moved by a simultaneous impulse to seek employment in Illinois, and that they so persistently sought it in the doubtful counties of the State. They came in train-loads, boatfuls, and in droves, flooding the central counties. Indignation rose to fever heat, threats of violence and bloodshed were rife, and the press was ablaze with protest. Still, the Republicans were confident of victory, but Herndon, prompted by his intuition — his "brute forecast," as he called it — felt that all was not safe. Three days before the election he wrote:

Springfield, Ill., October 30, 1858.

Mr. Parker.

Friend: — Today is Saturday and in a little while Mr. Lincoln opens on our square, close to the State House, on the great, vital, and dominant issues of the day and age. We feel, as usual, full of enthusiasm and of hope, and there is nothing which can well defeat us but the elements, and the wandering, roving, robbing Irish, who have flooded over the State. This charge is no humbug cry: it is a real

and solid and terrible reality, looking us right in the face, *with its thumb on its nose.* We, throughout the State, have this question before us: "What shall we do? Shall we tamely submit to the Irish, or shall we rise and cut their throats?" If blood is shed in Illinois to maintain the purity of the ballot-box, and the rights of the popular will, do not be at all surprised. We are roused and fired to fury. My feelings are ideas to some extent and therefore cool — I try to persuade both parties to keep calm and cool, if possible; but let me say to you, that there is great and imminent danger of a general and terrible row, and if it commences woe be to the Irish — poor fellows!

You know my position now, and let me state to you that I am amidst the knowing ones, clubs, county committees, State committees, leaders, sagacious men, etc., and from all places and persons comes up this intelligence, "All is well." I, myself, fear and am scolded because I cannot feel as I should — as others do. My intuition — brute forecast, if you will — my bones, tell he that *all* is not safe; yet I hope for the best. How are you—are you up and walking about? Quit reading and writing, if you can, and go off on a spree.

Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

Happily the election passed off quietly, barring a few fist fights, and with a full vote in spite of the downpour of rain. Lincoln carried the State but was defeated for the Senate. The popular vote stood, Republicans, 125,430; Douglas Democrats, 121,609; Buchanan Democrats, 5,191. The total vote cast exceeded that cast in 1856 by many thousands, especially the Democratic vote, which showed an increase not accounted for by the growth of population.[1] The Republican State ticket was elected by a good majority. One who would know the relative strength of Lincoln and Douglas must examine the vote cast for the members of the lower house of the Legislature. Avowed Douglas men polled over 174,000, while the Lincoln men received over 190,000, and the Buchanan "crew" less than 2,000; yet the Republicans, with so huge a majority, won only thirty-five seats, while the Democratic minority secured forty. Of the fifteen contested Senatorial seats, the Democrats won eight with a total vote of 44,826, as compared with the Republicans

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas,* by Allen Johnson, pp. 391-2 (1909).

who cast 53,784 votes and won only seven. That is to say, 754 votes cast in "Egypt" offset 1,000 polled in "Canaan," as the two ends of the State were named. Here was proof absolute that the State was gerrymandered, as Lincoln had said, in favor of the Democrats. Writing to Mr. Parker, Herndon reported the causes of defeat:

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 8, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir:—We are beaten in Illinois, as you are aware; but you may want to know the causes of our defeat. Firstly, then, I have more than once said our State presents three distinct phases of human development: the extreme north, the middle, and the extreme south. The first is intelligence, the second timidity, and the third ignorance on the special issue, but goodness and bravery. If a man spoke to suit the north—for freedom, justice—this killed him in the center, and in the south. So in the center, it killed him north and south. So in the south, it surely killed him north. Lincoln tried to stand high and elevated, so he fell deep.

Secondly, Greeley never gave us one single, solitary, manly lift. On the contrary, his silence was his opposition. This our people felt. We never got a smile or a word of encouragement outside of Illinois from any quarter during all this great canvass. The East was for Douglas *by silence.* This silence was terrible to us. Seward was against us too. Thirdly, Crittenden wrote letters to Illinois urging the Americans and Old Line Whigs to go for Douglas, and so they went "helter-skelter." Thousands of Whigs dropped us just on the eve of the election, through the influence of Crittenden.

Fourthly, all the pro-slavery men, north as well as south, went to a man for Douglas. They threw into this State money and men, and speakers. These forces and powers we were wholly denied by our Northern and Eastern friends. This cowed us somewhat, but let it go. Do you know what Byron says about revenge? He goes off in this wise: "There never was yet human power," etc. I shall make no hasty pledges, notwithstanding. I am bent on acting practically, so that I can help choke down slavery, and so I shall say nothing — not a word.

Fifthly, thousands of roving, robbing, bloated, pock-marked Catholic Irish were imported upon us from Phila-

delphia, New York, St. Louis, and other cities.[1] I myself know of such, by their own confession. Some have been arrested, and are now in jail awaiting trial.

I want distinctly to say to *you* that no one of all these causes defeated Lincoln; but I do want to say that it was the combination, with the power and influence of each, that "cleaned us out." Do you not *now* see that there is a conspiracy afloat which threatens the disorganization of the Republican party? Do you not see that Seward, Greeley, and Crittenden, etc., are at this moment in a joint common understanding to lower our platform?

In conclusion let me say that as Douglas has got all classes to "boil his pot," with antagonistic materials and forces, that there is bound, by the laws of nature, to be an explosion — namely, somebody will be fooled. Look out! Greeley is a natural fool, I think, in this matter — his hearty Douglas position. So with Seward, Crittenden, with South and North. Douglas cannot hold all these places and men. Mark that! I am busy at Court and have no time to cut down or amplify — hope you can understand.

Your friend, W H. HERNDON.

Of course Lincoln was disappointed,[2] but he could still joke. He felt, he said, "like the boy that stumped his toe — it hurt too bad to laugh, and he was too big to cry." His feelings

[1] One feature of the campaign, not mentioned by Mr. Herndon, was the activity of the Illinois Central Railroad. Its managers and employees were for Douglas, almost to a man. Indeed, the railroad interest of the State was chiefly responsible for the importation of voters, because it had favors to ask of the Legislature. The Illinois Central could afford to be industrious, if by so doing it could obtain release from the payment into the State treasury of 7 per cent of its gross earnings. — Quincy *Whig*, Nov. 6, 1858; *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, by Sparks, p. 536 (1909).

[2] Two days following the election, at a meeting in Manchester, Ohio, reported in the Sandusky, Ohio, *Commercial Register*, Lincoln was mentioned for the Presidency. This occasioned wide comment and elicited tributes to Lincoln in the Illinois press, but no Illinois paper seems to have named him for that highest office until May 4, 1859, when the *Central Illinois Gazette*, of Champaign, edited by J. W. Scroggs, took it up. The article was written by W. O. Stoddard. — *Life of Lincoln*, by W. C. Whitney, pp. 262-5 (1892). Lamon says that he saw in Lincoln's possession, shortly before his death, a letter written by J. G. Blaine during the campaign of 1858, in which it was predicted that

had been so deeply engaged, he had worked so hard, and the result, especially towards the last, had been so uncertain, that defeat was trying. That he felt it keenly is shown by his remark to Whitney the day after the election: "I can't help it, and I expect everybody to leave us;" and in his letter to Governor Crittenden, in which he said: "The emotions of defeat in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely, are fresh upon me." Yet he was glad that he made the race, for it gave him a hearing "on the great and durable question of the age which I would have had in no other way; and although I now sink out of view and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone." But, instead of sinking out of sight, he rose from the dust of defeat a National figure — no longer merely a leader of his party in his State, but the leader of a great people.

Douglas would beat Lincoln for the Senatorship but would be beaten by Lincoln for the Presidency in 1860. — *Life of Lincoln*, by Norman Hapgood, pp. 141-142 (1901).

CHAPTER VIII

Lincoln's Herndon

Added to the chagrin of defeat, Lincoln had to endure a lightness of purse that was actually painful. "The fight must go on," he wrote to Henry Asbury a few days after the election; "the cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one or even one hundred defeats;" but while the good wishes showered upon him from all parts of the North put him in good heart, they did not relieve his finances. His law practice had been neglected; the canvass had cost him time and money; and he had to cast about him for funds. To cap it all, he was asked by Norman Judd, chairman of the State Committee, to help make up a deficit in the campaign purse! He replied:

> I am willing to pay according to my ability, but I am the poorest hand living to get others to pay. I have been on expense so long, without earning anything, that I am absolutely without money now for even household expenses. Still, if you can put in $250 for me towards discharging the debt of the committee, I will allow it when you and I settle the private matter between us. This, with what I have already paid, . . . will exceed my subscription of $500. This, too, is exclusive of my ordinary expenses during the campaign, all of which, being added to my loss of time and business, bears pretty heavily upon one no better off than I am. But as I had the post of honor, it is not for me to be overnice. You are feeling badly; "and this, too, shall pass away;" never fear.

Many invitations came to him to make speeches; and in order to respond he prepared a lecture on *Discoveries, Inventions, and Improvements*, hoping thereby to recoup his losses. He began with Adam and Eve, and the invention of the "fig-leaf apron," of which he gave a humorous description, passing

thence to the invention of letters, writing, printing, of the application of steam and electricity; all of which he classed under the head of "inventions and discoveries." He gave a shrewd and satirical portrait of Douglas's "Young America," possessed by the Platonic "longing after" territory — and a "perfect rage for the 'new'; particularly the new earth mentioned in Revelation, in which, being no more sea, there must be about three times as much land as in the present. He is a great friend of humanity; and his desire for land is not selfish," quoth Lincoln, "but merely an impulse to extend the area of freedom"— with much more of the same political fooling, along with the "invention of negroes, or the present mode of using them." For the rest, aside from its ripples of humor, it was rather commonplace, and after delivering it once or twice he gave it up. When he went to Clinton to lecture no one turned out, and the local paper remarked: "That does not look much like being President." In fact, he soon realized that he was not a success outside the political field, and that he needed a moral issue to bring out his powers. Somewhat dejectedly he returned to the law, from which he had tried more than once to escape.

I

No one could gainsay that Douglas had achieved a great personal victory, against heavy odds.[1] In the East, Republican papers applauded him heartily, not so much because they lacked sympathy with Lincoln, as because they regarded his triumph as a signal rebuke to Buchanan, and because they hoped that he would do yet further damage to the Democratic party. This expectation was a source of cheer in anti-slavery circles, where the defeat of Lincoln was a real grief. So Theodore Parker, in his last letter to Mr. Herndon, interprets the scene, foretelling what he saw in the future:

[1] Many tributes have been paid to Douglas by men of opposite political faith; notably, by I. N. Arnold, *Life of Lincoln*, pp. 149-50 (1884); by J. G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. I, p. 149 (1884); by Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, pp. 357-59 (1869); by Gustave Koerner, and others.

Boston, Mass., Nov. 13, 1858.

My Dear Sir: — I am your debtor for three letters, very instructive ones too. I should not have allowed the account to run on so, had I not been sick. A surgical operation laid me on my bed for nearly three weeks, and, of course, I wrote only with another's hand, and but little even in that wise.

So you "are beaten;" the reasons you give are philosophical and profound, it seems to me. I think you have hit the nail on the head. But I don't agree with you as to Seward: what private reasons you have for your opinion, I cannot say, but his two speeches at Rochester and at Rome don't look like lowering the platform. He never spoke so bold and brave before. He quite outruns his party, and no Republican paper in New England, I fear, has dared to republish them. The anti-slavery papers printed one, and perhaps will copy the other.

You are beaten, but I am not so sure the *Administration* do not think it a worse defeat that you do. I think they hated and feared Douglas more than Lincoln. Had Lincoln succeeded, Douglas would be a ruined man. He would have no political position, and so little political power; he would have no original influence in American politics, for he does not deal with *principles* which a man may spread abroad from the pulpit or by the press, but only with *measures* that require political place to carry out. He could do the Administration no harm. But now in place for six years more, with his personal power unimpaired, and his positional power much enhanced, *he can do the Democratic party a world of damage.*

Here is what I conjecture will take place. There will be a reconstruction of the Democratic platform on Douglas's "principles" (else they lose the nation). This involves the (actual but not expressed) repudiation of Buchanan, and the sacrifice of his cabinet officers, etc. He will sink as low as Pierce. In 1860 the convention will nominate a man of the Douglas ideas. Will it be Douglas himself? I doubt it, for he has so many foes in the North and the South, that I think they will not risk him. But if he has heart enough to carry the convention, then I think the fight will be between him and Seward and that he will be beaten! I look for an anti-slavery administration in 1861 — I hope with Seward at its head. But it requires a deal of skill to organize a party, to find a harness which all the North can work in; but we shall triumph, *vide* Hammond's speech. Yours truly,

THEODORE PARKER.

So, no doubt, it would have turned out in the ordinary run of affairs; but in times of crises the best laid plans of prophets "gang aft agley." Rapid and radical changes took place before 1860, and Parker himself, before he died, turned from Seward to Lincoln as the true leader; due in part, perhaps, to the influence of Herndon, but in larger part to the fact that Seward had outrun his party, while Lincoln by his conservative radicalism had made himself the spokesman of all phases of the anti-slavery sentiment — the one man upon whom the North could unite. Nor did Mr. Herndon fail to rebuke Greeley for his lukewarmness toward Lincoln and the Illinois contest, inquiring if the philosopher intended to follow the logic of his situation and support Douglas for the Presidency in 1860. Judging from the rather curt reply, it must have been a stinging letter:

New York, N. Y., Nov. 14, 1858.

Friend Herndon: — I do not think I could write editorials that would seem to you lucid or satisfactory. Perhaps you will not be able to understand me when I advise you privately that: (1) Mr. Douglas would be the strongest candidate that the Democratic party could present for President; but (2) they will *not* present him. The old leaders won't endure it. (3) As he is doomed to be slaughtered at Charleston it is good policy to fatten him meantime. He will cut the better at killing time.

The Republicans of Illinois might have had Douglas with them in their late struggles, as those of Pennsylvania had Hickman, Indiana had Davis, New Jersey had Adrian, and New York had H. F. Clark and Haskins. Some of these may treat us badly; but a majority of them will prove sound coin. But the Republicans of Illinois chose to have the anti-Lecompton Democrats against rather than with them. In consequence, the State will cast a majority of its votes next December ('59) for a Democrat Speaker, while Pennsylvania will throw 21 to 4; New Jersey 5 to 0; and New York 28 to 4 on the right side. Your course may prove wiser in the long run; but ours vindicates itself at the outset. A gain of 25 members of Congress in three contiguous States is our answer to all gainsayers. Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

But to Herndon such gains, made at the expense of lowering

the party ideal and defeating its leaders, were not gains but losses. What he may have replied to Greeley, if he replied at all, we know not; but his real answer to such pseudo-practical opportunism may be found in his subsequent letters to Mr. Parker, to whom he continued to write until that frail and heroic figure passed out of hearing. His letter surveys the situation with a remarkable grasp of facts and tendencies, questioning the wisdom of Seward in announcing an "irrepressible conflict," justifying the attitude of the Illinois Republicans in refusing to support Douglas, and giving an estimate of Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, whose speech, denouncing the Lecompton fraud, had created a sensation. He wrote:

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 23, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I am ten thousand times obliged to you for your very kind letter, answering two or three I wrote to you concerning Illinois politics, and our Republican defeat, Lincoln, for the time being, our standard bearer. I never supposed I was writing a philosophic or profound letter. I knew I was spinning out quickly and inartistically what I saw. I owe you *one*, as we say West, and I will pay you some time in as good and pure coin. Remember that, and take it in good humor when it comes.

You state that you and I disagree about Senator Seward. Not at all: it was my rapid loose writing that misled you. I suppose, from what you say, that I put my verb in the *present*, when it should have been in the past. What I intended to say was this: There *was once* a conspiracy to lower the Republican platform, and in that conspiracy were Douglas, Seward, Wilson, Greeley, and the whole North in Congress. *This I know.* The manner — one of them — was to uphold Douglas and throw away Illinois; and this was done upon the condition that Douglas would war hugely against Lecompton. Let me see if I can convince you of my meaning. This conspiracy was on tapis, but was to a certain extent frustrated because Judge Trumbull would not agree to sacrifice Lincoln. The wild stampede in Illinois put things in a complex condition, and so left all men to act in "tact," according to discretion. To keep good faith with Douglas, Greeley, so far as he could, kept silent, and had we not rebelled at this wholesale traffic of principle, pru-

dence, and justice, it would have been just as I told you. Illinois Republicanism acted wisely, and I am one to get it so to act — that is, I helped to form an opinion and act energetically upon it. I will take that much of the dread responsibility and bide my time for sound judgments.

This conspiracy is not wholly abandoned yet. I rather guess that some leaders — such as Crittenden, etc.— want it yet to take place. I landed home from Washington and the East, and told our people what I told you. I have no private opinion on politics that I do not tell you. The feeling still to support Douglas is not yet wholly wiped out. This whole original understanding being shattered, and driven into spray, whipped into mist, left Seward free, and hence he burst out at Rochester and at Rome. By the by, these speeches are brave, bold, manly, earth-true, but is it, was it, prudent, wise, sagacious in Seward to utter them? What say you? What think you? The people are still tender footed as a whole. Some localities, as Boston, may be rough-iron shod, but behold Indiana and Illinois. Wisdom looks out generally, sweeping parts as well as wholes. Reformers, to effect anything politically, must have more than a bare majority. Hell's retrogrades sit upon customs, habits, disgusts, and bid you lay siege. Reformers must get so low, crawl along in the mud till a working majority sticks. Not so with any despotism — enough has already stuck to it by habit, custom, and education. Was it, now, wise in Seward to go out so wide sweeping? I doubt it. His speeches are eloquent, logical, philosophic, so much so, as you well say, that no New England paper dare publish them, except those of rank radical anti-slavery flags. I can see which way human ideas tend and march; and I know that mankind will follow the ideal, but what I see is that all men do not, *now*. So, was it prudent?

You say that Douglas will not be the Democratic nominee in 1860; that he will not receive the Charleston convention nomination; and that if he does he will be defeated. I think I agree with you, yet I shiver: there is a kind of victory fatality — a manifest destiny — hanging "round loose" about Douglas, and this idea makes me dread the future as a child does the dark. I received a letter from Horace Greeley, dated November 17th, in which he says:

"First, Mr. Douglas would be the strongest candidate that the Democracy could present for President, but, Secondly, they will not present him. The old leaders will not

endure it; and Thirdly, as he is doomed to be defeated at Charleston, it is a good policy to flatter him," etc.

So here, you, Greeley, and myself agree in the main. Let me ask you one question: If Greeley saw all this — Douglas's uprise and the consequent danger to Republicanism — beforehand, why did he not "jump in" and defeat the uprising of this monster in politics. Can he answer it? Douglas is now upon the nation, and how shall it shake him off? He is a man of no deep-hearted feelings — no wide, universal, uprising, outspreading ideas — no such thing in that little man's brains. He sits down in a mid-corner, and says to the rushing world, as it sweeps by, searching for its grand ideal, "Here and Now! Attend to the Here and the Now — no hereafter, no higher law, no God that never slumbers, watching justice." Well, it is too bad, but it is not my philosophy to lie down and grunt or whine. I will fight him again and again.

Your refer to Hammond's speech. I have read it, and now do you remember what I told you about him? I said he was a good man by nature, was doing violence to his own innate justice when he was making his speech about slavery, mud sills, etc. You draw an inference from his speech that is not, I think, warranted. Your inference is this — a change of Southern sentiment. The fact, I think, is here: Hammond was made *to think* in the Senate, and that led him back to old child justice; it is an individual change that will not amount to much. I see the Southern papers are down on him. We will soon see which way things drift.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

For weeks after the election the Eastern papers not only lauded Douglas, but upbraided the Illinois Republicans for not supporting him. The Boston *Traveller*, especially, was bitter in its scolding, going so far as to charge that the Illinois leaders, "merely to gratify a personal and political hatred," had acted with a handful of Buchanan Democrats in having Douglas men removed from office, "thus becoming the tools of the very 'slave-power' which they are so fond of denouncing." They had compelled their party in the nation to throw aside the certainty of success in 1860, and return to the wilderness where they may wander for forty years, if not forever. "Parties, like individuals," continued this wise journal of the East, "have their gold-

en moments; but if they neglect to improve them, those moments rarely return." Indeed, it has not been generally realized under what handicaps Lincoln and his friends labored in that contest. They fought not only Douglas at home, where his power and popularity in his party were next to omnipotent, but the whole Republican party outside of the State, together with the American party and the entire South. Turn whichsoever way they would, they met an enemy. Contending, hand to hand, with the most powerful, the most unscrupulous, and most facile and audacious foe that free principles ever had in the North, whose violations of the rules of political warfare were without parallel, every effort of their friends abroad was on the side of their enemies at home. They lost the Senate, but they did not lose the fight, even when waged against such odds; for, as the Chicago *Press and Tribune* said, the chief victory was actually won:

> We have demonstrated the power of Republicanism as an element in all future contests, and its incorruptibility, at least in Illinois, when tempted by prospects of immediate success. We have dissolved the coalition once half formed, by which our platform was to be let down, by which our principles would have lost their vitality, and by which success in 1860 would have been ten-fold more disastrous than defeat. So far, well. And now for the future: We believe it is the intention of Illinois Republicans to go right on in the course that they have marked out — to ask no aid that conviction of the justice and necessity of their principles will not bring — to make no alliances, offensive or defensive, with any faction, party, or clique — to ask no favor — to give no quarter — to fight the great battle for the ascendency of free principles as zealous, earnest men should — to be content with defeat as long as it must be endured — to use success wisely when we win it. If we are to have the co-operation of the party elsewhere, well; if not, Illinois is sovereign, and her sons can walk alone!

Such was the ultimatum from "the land of full-grown men," nor could they be begged, bribed, or threatened to retract it; and by that sign they conquered. It is not too much to say — as, in fact, Lincoln did say in his letter to S. P. Chase, a few months later — that, had not the Republicans of Illinois made

their stand, the party would have gone to pieces utterly. Yet there are those who marvel that Lincoln was placed at the head of the ticket in 1860, as though it were a happy accident in politics. What has hitherto been dim ought now to be plain, for the men who stood back of Lincoln were of his spirit, as uncompromising in principle as they were astute and cunning in method. Mr. Herndon makes the situation transparent:

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 27, 1858.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I was one of those spontaneous, instinctive, and it may be far-seeing, Suckers, that made Illinois mutinous against the Douglas-Greeley sale of Illinois and Republicanism therein. Our course or Greeley's I want you to approve. If our course was wrong, say so; if Greeley's, say so. Now look at the facts and the men: Firstly, take Haskins, and small men of such calibre, who can send no great political whirlwind up or down. The Republicans of New York and New England can afford to stoop and palaver with them — get them to stick, and lift them up on the broad shoulders of rigorous Republicanism, walking off with them to the camp of real democracy. He and such live no longer — are wholly absorbed. Here Greeley did right — no danger in this: it was child's play — but, Secondly, take Douglas: he is a huge mud-giant, who, if you but stoop to him, fastens his clutches around your neck and keeps you down in the mud, carrying you off into the sham democracy. There is no absorption and uplifting here — far otherwise: the uplifting and absorption turn out to be the reverse of foolish expectancy.

In the first place the Republicans can disorganize, and at the call of the drum and fife, and other political screechings, they can soon get together again; but this is not so in Douglas's case. Now what is wise in New York over *Haskins*, is not wise in Illinois over *Douglas* — far otherwise. Then for Greeley to set down a law for us was foolish, absurd, in short, idiotic.

When I was at Washington and in the East I found out from Judge Trumbull and others that there was a disposition to sell out Illinois, and to lower the Republican platform in general, to suit Douglas's low standard of right and wrong. I went to New York and Greeley by *innuendoes* startled me — went to your Boston and found out about the same thing. I knew Douglas, had known him for years, so

did our people — all knew him to the core. So we met, talked over the matter in Chicago, and the universal sentiment was this: Can't trust Douglas; if we run him it must be on distinct Democratic Cincinnati platforms, underpropped by a foul substratum of despotism, and fully developed pro-slaveryism. So every man sent up his individual "No," and along with it all said "Never!"

What, then, shall be done? Shall we run Douglas, and become, if not in intent a pro-slavery party, in fact false, sham Democrats, every one of us. If we run him we must disorganize and become forces for slavery in 1860; for once disorganized and following Douglas one year, we are swamped, gone out of this world's sight into slavery worship. So here we are, and now what shall be done? Shall we run Lincoln, love liberty, and keep organized for the great, deep, momentous turning battle of 1860? Individual shouts sent up their everlasting "Yes," and so the universal went wedded to the individual Well, *Lincoln was our man, and Liberty and God our motto!* We were whipped, as you are sadly aware, doubtless. What looms up great and grand in the distance?

Come, go back with me one moment. If we went for Douglas we had to give up Republicanism and wholly disorganize. We are on the ground — see this everywhere. Our good neighbors say so, our heads say so. Can *distant* Greeley say, "liars?" — pshaw! Are the Eastern politicians all fools? They seem to be so. I am a young, undisciplined, uneducated, wild man, but I can see to the gizzard of this question. We are all disorganized in Illinois and shouting for Douglas, and the blast of the bugle, bursting on the air, blown by Freedom, calling to her braves, rolls upon us in 1860 — and where are we? Why, disorganized, hooting for Douglas, and for slavery. Pretty fix, and Greeley says — "All right." My dog-sagacity, my mud instinct, says — fool! Stoop for Haskins and Davis, Greeley may; but for Douglas, let him and the world beware! What can the North do in 1860 with Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, etc., disorganized? Why, get whipped out. Greeley, horn-eyed, says, "All right, just the thing, quite practical, easy to be done." And to which I say, "Easy if you want to elect a pro-slavery Southern man for 1860."

Come, go back with me once more, and now what do you see in Illinois? Why, a well-drilled, "Fritz" organized, educated, liberty-loving, God-fearing Republican party,

broad and wide-awake, ready for the fight, shouting for man, liberty, justice, God and their complex duties and relations, now and forever. Greeley, shaking his Fourrier head at us, may be seen, crying, "All wrong." Well, it may be so; but I cannot see it.

I say I came home after discovering the Greeley-Douglas-Seward-Crittenden tendencies, and told our people of them. They had faith in what I said, *and more in their own souls,* and so we went to war most mutinous. We are, for Senator, whipped, but not for State officers; and so, thank God, we are this day a sober, staunch, incorrigible fact and force in Republicanism. Here we are: feel our nerves, and muscles, and bones; they are all in place, a vital, healthy, living organism, ready to function at God's order —"Up and at them!" Excuse me. Could not help it. Must spit it out.

Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

On January 6th, the Illinois Legislature met in joint session to elect a Senator, and no man ventured, or desired, to change his vote. Douglas received fifty-four votes, Lincoln forty-six. "Glory to God and the Sucker Democracy," Lanphier, of the *State Register*, telegraphed to his chief.[1] And back over the wires from Washington came the laconic reply, "Let the voice of the people rule." But, in view of the figures of the election returns, the voice of the people must have seemed in this instance somewhat husky. A few days later Herndon, hearing that Mr. Parker was ill, wrote to inquire the cause:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 15, 1859.

Friend Parker:

I am in our Supreme Court hearing discussed the difference between "tweedledee and tweedledum"— a fine spun point over an absurdity woven out by some priest 1200 years gone by now. Whilst this is going on I am reading your lecture on Mr. Adams, a synopsis of it rather, and it rings like you; at once finely analytic, profoundly synthetic, truly discriminating and philosophic. It is honest, candid, and places Mr. Adams where my instincts — not my reading — placed him. I see more pleasure in reading this than the lawyers do in their heated, foaming discussion. *I hate the law*: it cramps me; it seems to me priestly and barbaric. I am above the suspicion of not knowing somewhat of the his-

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, p. 392 (1908).

tory, spirit, and principles of the law, and my feelings do not come of disappointment. I say I hate the law.

I hear you are still unwell, and hardly able to be out attending to your business or lecturing. I hope it is nothing serious. What is the matter, if it is not prying into a man's private matters too much? I hope you will let your four lectures on Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin come out soon. Can you not do this without infringing too much on your calculations? By the by, no man has yet let out a philosophic idea of the causes of the American Revolution, or the principles which lay thereunder — no, not one. Can you not do this in some of your lectures? Again, I never have seen or read or heard of a good lecture on the sweep of human liberty — say commencing at India and ending in America. Think of this. W. H. HERNDON.

But alas, Parker had suffered a violent hemorrhage of the lungs, and had other things to think of. After a consultation of physicians he was told that his chance of recovery was but one in ten, and a trip to the West Indies and thence to Europe was decided on. He dropped a line to Herndon, "a poor scrawl with a pencil," ready to die if need be, laughing at the odds of nine to one. Letters from all over the nation, and beyond the seas, poured in upon him, so richly ladened with human sympathy and personal tribute that his heart was broken with delight. Mr. Herndon wrote out of a heavy heart:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 25, 1859.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — I this moment received your very kind note, and for which I thank you. I do most sincerely, religiously regret your illness; and had I the power you should not suffer long; but should spring back into your boyhood's best — perfect health. I am not religious the way the world runs, but may I say this: God grant you a happy journey and a speedy recovery, so that you may come back to your native land invigorated, doing the people good who now curse you! May Heaven's great eye and loving heart watch over you and pulse into you some of His vitality! Goodby till you return. Your friend, W. H. HERNDON.

At Havana Parker wrote a letter to his church which has been printed with the title, "Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister" — the best life of Parker that has so far been writ-

ten, though he wrote, as he said, "standing up to his neck in the grave." Herndon followed him on his journey with solicitude and many a silent prayer, reading every line about him and from him in the papers, as he traveled from Cuba to London, then to Paris, amid troops of friends, and thence to Italy to return no more. From afar he watched the changing scene in his native land, studying, planning books, writing scores of letters, while fighting death inch by inch. Towards the end he said — the true word of a wandering mind —"There are two Theodore Parkers now: one is dying here in Italy; the other I have planted in America. He will live there and finish my work." [1]

II

Of the office life of Lincoln and Herndon much has been written, though the interest has naturally centered about the senior partner. Vivid glimpses of the two men in their personal relations have been given by those who were law students in the office, among whom were Elmer Ellsworth, afterwards colonel of the famous Zouaves, John H. Littlefield, and others. Their memories, like so much that has been written of Lincoln, were no doubt colored by later events, but they are none the less vivid and revealing. At Ottawa, during the campaign of 1858, Lincoln met a Mr. Littlefield who asked that his brother might come to Springfield and study law. Lincoln replied: "All right, send him down and we will take a look at him." Mr. Littlefield writes: [2]

> When I arrived at the law-office, I found what seemed to me the oddest mortal I had ever met. He was sitting down when I came in, and I should have said that he was about my height — five feet eight; but when he rose to greet me, it was upon a pair of legs that lifted him to an altitude of six feet and four inches. "Glad to see you, young man," he said, giving me a cordial grasp of the hand. "Your

[1] *Theodore Parker*, by J. W. Chadwick, p. 371 (1900).

[2] These reminiscences, published in *Every Where*, edited by Will Carleton, February, 1902, are supplementary to those furnished by Mr. Littlefield for the Herndon and Weik biography (Vol. I, pp. 315-319).

brother says you are a good deal like him, only more so: and that's enough. Arrange the preliminaries with 'Billy,' and go ahead." Billy was Lincoln's partner — William H. Herndon, an agreeable, scholarly man; and I felt duly installed, within a moment's time. It was not long before I found myself sitting at the same table with these two exponents of the law — each engaged in study — while six pedal extremities of various sizes adorned the aforesaid table. "We ought to concentrate enough magnetism, in this way, to run a whole court room," Herndon used to say. Lincoln was fifty; Herndon was forty; and I was twenty-five — a gradation of years that made one of them seem to me like a brother, and the other like a father: and they were certainly all these.

I found myself studying Lincoln more and more, as the days went on. "The most unique man I ever knew," was my verdict, over and over again. He has been called awkward and ungainly, but this was not true. He was simply odd and original, in his own inimitable way. All the powers of Nature never could have made another one. His clothes were of good material, but never looked "stylish:" he not only had, but *was* a style of his own. His tall silk hat was not always exquisitely groomed, and generally came down close to his ears. His old-fashioned calf-skin boots were not invariably up to the most exquisite polish; but it was the man and not the clothes that occupied your thought.

"You have no case; better settle:" I have heard him tell would-be clients, again and again. He would not advocate a cause if he thought it was in the wrong. I used to think he was losing much business in that way; but found that he was very likely to get the other side of the case — thus having the incalculable advantage of being in the right. His practice extended throughout a large circuit, and he was always picking up new stories, which lost nothing by their terse and epigrammatic rendering. Often I have seen him look up from a case into which he was studying, with the remark, "This fellow reminds me of such and such a story"— and the little anecdote always fitted, like a lady's glove.

Outside of his law-tomes, I never noticed that Lincoln was much of a reader. There were three books, however, in which he could have been thoroughly examined, and come out with honors: and those were the Bible, Skakespear, and Robert Burns's poems. I frequently listened to him and Herndon arguing about the subject of slavery. Strange to

> say, the man who was destined within five years to liberate millions of negroes by a stroke of his pen, was not nearly so fervid an Abolitionist as his partner. When, in 1860, he made his now famous speech at Cooper Institute, New York, he began to be whisperingly suggested for President; and, of course, we in the office began to build White House castles for him. I used to tell him he was sure of it. He would laugh indulgently, and say, "John, I haven't a chance in a hundred." But I kept on, and even got my discourse ready in case he was nominated. I asked him to hear it and criticise it for me. He steadfastly refused, till, one afternoon, he came into the office, planted himself in a corner, and said, "Well, John, I think I feel strong enough this afternoon to stand that speech." He still laughed at the idea of his being President.

During the campaign of 1856, Mr. Charles S. Zane came to Springfield and applied to become a law student in the office of "Lincoln & Herndon," a firm in whose favor he had heard a great deal. Lincoln was out on the stump, but Mr. Herndon received the young man cordially, and straightway asked as to his politics. He rejoiced to learn that Mr. Zane was an anti-slavery man and a Republican, but advised him to keep out of politics until he had obtained a practice, and then to stay out in order to keep it. There was no opening in the office for a new student, and Mr. Zane entered another office; but this was the beginning of a long and intimate friendship with Mr. Herndon, whose niece he afterwards married. The following year Mr. Zane received a license to practice law, and opened an office upon the floor of the same building just above that occupied by Lincoln & Herndon. At the request of the author Judge Zane has written the following reminiscences of the two partners as he knew them, particularly of Mr. Herndon, of whom he gives a singularly discriminating estimate both as a man and as a lawyer. He writes:[1]

> Beginning the practice with few books, they cheerfully gave me the benefit of their library and sometimes of their advice.

[1] Ms. prepared by Judge Zane, May 18, 1910. Judge Zane is a resident of Salt Lake City, Utah, where he has long held an honored position on the bench.

Under such circumstances I had the opportunity of observing their ways, their treatment of clients of varied intelligence and behavior, and of learning to some extent their methods and of inferring their temperaments, dispositions and tendencies. I also heard them examine witnesses and argue questions of law and fact in court. After Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated President, Mr. Herndon and I formed a partnership which continued about eight years. During that time my relations and associations with Mr. Herndon became more intimate.

Mr. Herndon was about five feet nine inches in height and well proportioned; his movements were swift; he was a rapid thinker, writer and speaker, and usually reached his conclusions quickly and expressed them forcibly and positively. His clients usually went away perfectly satisfied with his advice. He examined witnesses rapidly, and was not unfair, persistent, or tedious. He was always courteous and respectful to the court and to his professional brethren. He was popular as a man, as a lawyer, and as a public speaker. It was easy to follow the thread of his argument. He was interesting and always secured the attention of his hearers. He was not always sufficiently careful as to his premises and his data. In this he was unlike his famous partner. Mr. Lincoln as a reasoner was careful as to his premises and drew his inferences cautiously and with great clearness. It was largely this and his ability to fathom human motives that made him one of the wisest of statesmen.

In their office and elsewhere the partners always treated each other kindly and with great respect. Mr. Lincoln usually called his partner Billy and Mr. Herndon always addressed his partner as Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Herndon as a rule considered propositions and questions in the abstract, while Mr. Lincoln considered them more in the concrete. The latter had great capacity for analysis and generalization. He was an adept in drawing reasonable inferences. As a rule they both did not engage in the trial of the same case. So far as I observed them, the best of feeling existed between them. Mr. Herndon was very charitable in judging the actions and the conduct of his fellow men, and treated them with great magnanimity under all circumstances calling for an expression of that virtue. He never harbored ill-will or malice towards any man, and if he ever had an enemy I never knew it.

He was regarded as a good offhand lawyer, and as a rule did not spend much time in the preparation of his cases; in

that respect he was like Stephen T. Logan, Mr. Lincoln's former partner; he was wonderfully ready. Mr. Lincoln was more methodical and systematic. Mr. Herndon thought he was too careful in presenting his arguments to the court, that he sometimes spent too much time in drawing inferences in support of his propositions and in reasoning out his positions.

Mr. Herndon was a member of a pro-slavery family, but when the Whig party to which he belonged dissolved in 1854 on the slavery issue, he took his stand with the anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats, and afterwards helped to organize the Republican party and never faltered in its support. He loved justice and liberty, was tolerant of all beliefs and creeds, and believed that all men should be free without distinction as to race or color.

Another "Lincoln & Herndon" student in those years was Mr. Henry B. Rankin,[1] who entered the office in the mid-fifties and made it his business home until the breaking out of the war. His parents had known the Greens, Rutledges, Herndons, Spears, and other old friends of Lincoln and Herndon at New Salem, and his mother had been a friend of Ann Rutledge. Though only a lad fresh from school when he entered the office, he was a keen observer of the student-life of the two men, their methods of work and processes of thought, — the slow intellectual movements of Lincoln, the familiar greatness of his thought and the plainness of his speech, contrasting vividly with the swift and facile intellect of his partner, whose thought was a series of pictures and whose conversation was picturesque and many-colored. The contrast was indeed complete; Herndon being a man careless of dress, of little personal dignity, of impetuous temper, addicted at times

[1] Mr. Rankin is a resident of Springfield, Ill., and has been for many years — a man of rare insight and charm. But he has refused to be interviewed by Lincoln students hitherto because of their habitual injustice to Mr. Herndon, whom he knew intimately and well. He divined the greatness of Lincoln from the first, but he was also appreciative of the service rendered by the junior member of the firm. Among his treasures are a number of mementoes of his former tutors and friends, including the files of the *Southern Literary Messenger* which came to the office. The author of this study is indebted to Mr. Rankin equally for his suggestions and his kindness.

to barn-yard talk; while Lincoln was the personification of dignity, but did not know it. There was something exquisite in Lincoln, a native majesty and refinement of soul, which impressed young men deeply. Herndon was more familiar, companionable, and less reserved, more like a brother to the boys who wrestled with Blackstone and Kent.

One feature of this partnership, not sufficiently emphasized, was the unconscious part which the junior member played in the education of his chief. Widely and variously read, Herndon was a brilliant *raconteur*, and the cream of his reading poured forth in his office talk, while his partner gravely listened and mused. Often Lincoln would stretch himself on the office cot, aweary of his toil, and say, "Now, Billy, tell me about the books;" and Herndon would discourse by the hour, ranging over history, literature, philosophy, and science. Outside of the newspapers, and the political discussion of the day, Lincoln read very little, nor could his partner induce him to do so. He tried to read Emerson, whose essays and addresses Herndon so much admired, but the thought of the sage was too intangible and ethereal, until Emerson came down to earth, as Carlyle said, and wrote *The Conduct of Life*. Herndon reveled in German philosophy, while to Lincoln those thinkers, so far as he "tackled" them, seemed to be walking a tight rope in the top of the tent or reposing upon couches of ether. When Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* came out Lincoln undertook to read it, only to be repelled by its rapturous self-glorification and its vague, dreamy mysticism. With characteristic zest Herndon plunged into Darwin's *Origin of Species* when it appeared, but Lincoln refused to follow on the plea that the water was too deep. He was, however, interested in *Vestiges of Creation*, whose dogma of the universal reign of law fitted into his philosophy in which there were no accidents. He frequently perused the *Westminster* and *Edinburgh Reviews*, which Herndon kept on the office table, but he could not enthuse over Herbert Spencer. Occasionally, when meditating an important speech, he would ask his partner for books, and Herndon, besides furnishing the books, would some-

times make a brief of his own reading on the subject, especially if it were a question of history. After this manner they worked together, comrades and friends, totally unlike but with the utmost good feeling, until Fame drove her chariot through the back office.

No country law office ever had a finer intellectual air, and this, with its homely simplicity of fraternity, made it an inspiring place for young men to study. Indeed, a new school of eloquence might have formed itself by the methods of Lincoln — depending for its results not upon the subtlety of rhetoric, nor the magic of elocution, but claiming attention and assent by direct and honest appeals to the common understanding. Both partners were gracious to young men, by nature as well as by political habit, and Herndon was particularly eager to enlist their interest in books of general culture. But by the qualities of their minds both men dealt with the weightier matters of the law, rather than with its "mint, anise and cummin," and they were poor models in the conduct of an orderly office.

III

If Lincoln did not see the White House at the end of the road he was now traveling, he must have had dreams of it. His debates with Douglas had revealed him in one of his rarest parts — his command of the minds of men by his artless and unstudied oratory.[1] Not that he neglected to study the questions he debated; no counsel ever gave more attention to the points of his case; but when once thought out, the argument moved with a familiar and effective freedom in its appeal to the common sense and native honesty of men. He was now freely spoken of for the highest office in the land, first in a whisper among his friends, and then in an ever-widening circle. To T. J. Pickett in April, 1859, he wrote, "I must in candor say that I do not think myself fit for the Presidency."

[1] See Blaine's estimate of Lincoln as an orator, *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. I, p. 145; also that of I. N. Arnold, *Life of Lincoln*, pp. 139, 144 (1884).

To others he wrote in the same way, intimating that he would rather be in the Senate than in the White House, but no one knew better than he the value of a becoming modesty.

Once started, the movement spread rapidly and strongly. It was pointed out that he had all the requisites of an available man. He had not been in office to incur the jealousies of powerful rivals; he had made a valiant fight in his own State; he was manly, able, and true; above all he was a man of the people, in reality not in pose, having been a rail-splitter, a flat-boatman, a grocery keeper — everything that could commend him to the heart of the masses. His manners, his dress, his stories, and his popular name of "Honest Old Abe," marked him as a man whose "running qualities" out-numbered those of Harrison or Taylor. That Lincoln was aware of all this there can be no doubt, and his movements were as adroit as his words were modest: he laughed at the idea of his being President while in the very act of planning to bring it about.

Naturally he was catechised as to his position on various public questions. Writing to Edward Wallace who had asked his views on the tariff, he said that he had formerly been a Henry Clay tariff Whig and had made more speeches on that subject than on any other. Nor had his views changed since. He held that if there could be a moderate, carefully adjusted protective tariff, so far acquiesced in as not to be a perpetual subject of political strife, squabbles, changes, and uncertainties, it would be well. Still, in his opinion, the revival of that question just now "will not advance the cause itself, or the man who revives it." One of the German leaders, Dr. Canisius, asked him what he thought of the restriction upon naturalization recently adopted in Massachusetts, and whether he favored a fusion of all the opposition elements in the next canvass. He replied, that, as to the restrictions, he was unalterably opposed to them, and as to fusion, he would not lower "the Republican standard even by a hair's breadth." His astute frankness won confidence, and while he did not parry issues he did insist that attention be kept fixed on the one great issue before the nation.

Once more, in September, 1859, Lincoln left his office for politics, at the call of his party in Ohio, speaking at Columbus and at Cincinnati. Douglas had passed through the State before him in behalf of the Democrats, and Lincoln was eager to reply to his old foe, which he did in two of his best orations, free of the personal feeling which in the heat of the Illinois contest had found its way into the debates. Besides, Douglas had recently written "a copyright essay" for *Harper's Magazine* expatiating at length and learnedly upon the sanctity and efficacy of "popular sovereignty," and this gave Lincoln an opportunity to restate his views in apt and epigrammatic fashion. At Columbus, after denying that he had any right or inclination to interfere with slavery in the States where it existed, or that he was in favor of negro suffrage — "a vile conception" — he took the essay of Douglas for his text, along with the remark of the Senator in his Memphis speech, that, in a fight between a negro and a crocodile, he would be on the side of the negro. At Cincinnati the following evening he spoke in an entirely different manner, it being the first time in his life, he began, that he had appeared "before an audience in so great a city." His speech was addressed, not without playful irony, to the Kentuckians whom Douglas had said he desired to shoot at over the river to the destruction of domestic peace. This gave novelty to his effort, so that his arguments, although in no sense new, wore another guise.

These two speeches, at once timely and effective, weighed heavily in the balance in Ohio that year, while at the same time they called attention to the orator. His relation of good-fellowship with his audiences, his humor and tact in face of interruptions, his homely imagery and catchy phrases, were far-reaching in effect. These speeches were afterwards published in a volume with the debates and sold in editions aggregating many thousands of copies. Some of his pithy sayings may illustrate the new garbs in which he clothed old arguments:

> Now, what is Judge Douglas's popular sovereignty? It is, as a principle, no other than that, if one man chooses to

make a slave of another man, neither that man nor anybody else has a right to object.

He proceeds to assume, without proving it, that slavery is one of those little, unimportant, trivial matters which are of just about as much consequence as the question would be, whether my neighbor should raise horned cattle or plant tobacco; that there is no moral question about it, but that it is altogether a matter of dollars and cents; that when a new Territory is opened for settlement, the first man who goes into it may plant there a thing which, like the Canada thistle or some other of those pests of the soil, cannot be dug out by the millions of men who come thereafter.

I suppose the institution of slavery really looks small to him. He is so put up by nature that a lash upon his back would hurt, but a lash upon anybody else's back does not hurt him. That is the build of the man. . . . Judge Douglas ought to remember that . . . while he is put up in that way a good many are not.

There was some inconsistency in saying that the Dred Scott decision was right, and saying, too, that the people of the Territory could lawfully drive slavery out again. When all the trash . . . was cleared away from it — all the chaff fanned out of it, it was a bare absurdity — *no less than that a thing may be lawfully driven away from where it has a lawful right to be.*

That is all. It is a mere matter of policy; there is a perfect right according to interest to do just as you please — when this is done, where this doctrine prevails, the miners and sappers will have formed public opinion for the slave-trade. They will be ready for Jeff Davis and Stephens and other leaders of that company.

These popular sovereigns are at this work; blowing out the moral lights around us; teaching that the negro is no longer a man but a brute; that the Declaration has nothing to do with him; that he ranks with the crocodile and the reptile; that man, with body and soul, is a matter of dollars and cents.

In many of the Slave States . . . you are trying to show that slavery existed in the Bible times by divine ordinance. Now, Douglas is wiser than you, for your own benefit, upon that subject. Douglas knows that whenever you establish that slavery was right by the Bible, it will occur that that slavery was the slavery of the *white* man — of men without reference to color — and he knows very well that you may entertain that idea in Kentucky as much as you

please, but you will never win any Northern support upon it.

I say that there is room enough for us all to be free, and that it not only does not wrong the white man that the negro should be free, but it positively wrongs the mass of the white men that the negro should be enslaved; that the mass of white men are really injured by the effects of slave labor in the vicinity of the fields of their own labor.

Rumors that "the tall Sucker" was an aspirant for the White House had traveled apace, and, after reading his speeches in Ohio, the leaders of the East wanted to see and hear him. Early in October Lincoln "looked pleased, not to say tickled," as Herndon puts it, when he came into the office with a letter inviting him to speak in New York.

"Billy, I am invited to deliver a lecture in New York. Shall I go?" he said, tossing the letter on the table.

"By all means," said his partner; "and it is a good opening, too. Go, Mr. Lincoln; make your best effort. Speak with your usual lucidity and thoroughness."

"If you were in my fix, what subject would you choose?" asked Lincoln, who, apart from politics, would as soon take for his theme "The Beautiful" as anything else, when he had almost no sense of it.

"Why, a political one," replied his partner quickly, "that is your forte;" for Herndon dreaded the thought of a lecture, remembering the dismal failure of his friend in that field. Lincoln wrote in response to the invitation, that he would avail himself of it the coming February, provided he might be permitted to make a political speech in case he did not find time to prepare one of another kind. Whereupon he set to work preparing his speech, which cost him more toil than any other speech of his life, and the march of events came to his aid.

Late in October news flashed over the wires which set the nation, North and South, afire. John Brown,[1] a zealot of

[1] *Life and Letters of John Brown*, by F. B. Sanborn (1910). This is by far the best account of Brown, his personal history and intellectual qualities, his plans, dreams, and desperate endeavors; the author being implicated with him in his undertaking. See *Recollections of Seventy Years*, by F. B. Sanborn, pp. 187-252 (1909). For Mr. Parker's con-

the Cromwellian type, had entered Virginia with two sons and a small band, with hope of inciting the slaves to insurrection. He had been active in the Kansas wars, where one of his sons had been shot by a clerical champion of slavery from Missouri, and where at the point of the rifle he had forced a band of ruffians to kneel and pray, probably for the first time in their lives. Exalted by his enthusiasm, yet acting with the coolest intrepidity and sagacity, he seized Harper's Ferry, where there was a Federal arsenal, and called the slaves to freedom — inspired by the notion, long current, that the slaves were restless, discontented, and ready to rebel, awaiting only an opportunity and a leader to break out in efficacious revolt. It was not the first instance in history in which a reformer, stung to frenzy by towering wrong, erred by attributing to those whom he would help feelings to which they were strangers. Valiantly, but in vain, he appealed to the slaves to follow his leadership. No slaves answered his call, and he was soon surrounded, with his party; his two sons were shot, and he, fighting with almost unearthly courage, was wounded and overpowered.

Not only Virginia, but the whole South, was wild with panic and rage, while in the North there was much sympathy for Brown, disguising itself under faint disapprobation. All along the leaders of the South had charged upon Abolitionists that they sought to bring about the instant and immediate emancipation they demanded by incendiary methods; and now their charge seemed to be not without ground. Abolition tracts were freely scattered throughout the Slave States; pictures printed upon cheap handkerchiefs, such as might be easily circulated among the slaves, were sent — the only effect of which, whatever may have been the object, was to instigate insurrection. Of course, Southern politicians held the Republican party responsible not only for these tactics, but for the John Brown invasion. And, of course, that was not true; but even in ordinary times when partisan rancor enters reason and fairness take wings.

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nection with Brown, see *Theodore Parker*, by J. W. Chadwick, pp. 319-345, 365 (1900), and by Sanborn in the latest volume of Parker's Works (1910).

What Lincoln, in the recesses of his heart, thought of old John Brown, we are left to conjecture; but we know how he refuted the charge that his party, as a party, was behind that picturesque but fatuous foray. In December he went to Kansas, a stronghold of Douglasism, lured by the hope of winning its hard-fisted, self-reliant frontier citizens from the insidious dogma of "popular sovereignty," with which they were infatuated. He spoke at Elwood, Doniphan, Troy, Atchison, and twice at Leavenworth, and was everywhere received with ovations which astonished and gratified him. Only a few random jottings of his speeches in Kansas have been preserved;[1] but happily one of them was reported, though it has been strangely neglected and forgotten. On December 2nd, the day that John Brown was executed,[2] he spoke at Troy, and this speech should be better known:[3]

> You people of Kansas will soon have to bear a part in the national government — which has always had, has had, and must continue to have, a policy regarding slavery. Such a policy must of necessity take one of two directions. It must deal with negro slavery either as wrong or as not wrong. In our early national policy, indicated by the prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territory, and by the

[1] *Complete Works of Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, Vol. I, p. 585 (1894).

[2] John Brown was hanged at Charlestown, Va., Dec. 2, 1858, and met his fate with martyr calmness. His bearing impressed even his enemies. — *Life of Governor Wise*, by J. S. Wise (1899). The consolations of religion, tendered him by a pro-slavery clergyman, he declined, probably remembering the clerical filibuster who shot his son in Kansas. Among the Virginia militia who surrounded the scaffold was John Wilkes Booth — the assassin of Lincoln — who was an actor in Richmond, and left his theater to join Company F for that day. — *Life of Brown*, by F. B. Sanborn, p. 626 (1910). Whatever may be thought of John Brown's methods, he must have been an unusual man to have won the sympathy and aid of such men as Parker, Emerson, S. G. Howe, Gerritt Smith, Stearns, Sanborn, and others. In the war that ensued his soul went marching on in a battle hymn.

[3] D. W. Wilder, the historian of Kansas, was present and heard the speech, reporting it to his old school friend, F. B. Sanborn; by whose kindness it is here used. For Wilder's memories of Lincoln in Kansas, see *Life of Brown*, by F. B. Sanborn, pp. 183-4 (1910).

declaration against the foreign slave-trade, the idea must have been that slavery was a wrong, only to be tolerated because it was actually present. But now a new policy has come in, based on the idea that slavery is not wrong, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, under which you have been living, has applied this new policy. How do you like it? You have tested it for the first time on a large scale, and here are your results:

Five years of conflict almost continuous, with fire and slaughter; four or five State constitutions, and at last one that admits you to the Union as a Free State. After all the difficulties that you know so well, you will not get what we, of Illinois, got in that old Northwest Territory, without any difficulty to speak of.

Look, then, at these two policies as they actually worked, and tell me, if, after all, the good old way of Washington and Jefferson was not the better of the two? For the new policy has proved false to all its fine promises, to the nation and to you, its victims. To the nation it promised the end of the slavery agitation, and that speedily — but just the contrary has happened. To you it promised to give a greater control of your own local affairs; yet, by actual trial, daily and yearly, you have had less control of them, and have been more bedeviled by outside interference than any other American people ever were. This new scheme of "popular sovereignty," had it been honest, would have given you the right of choosing your own Governors — a very small right. For if there is any reason why State privileges should not be given at once to a Territory, it must be because the population is small. But, if while your numbers were few you were fit to do some things and not to do others, it must have been the more important things that you were unfit to do, while you might do the smaller things. Now in forbidding you to elect your own Governor, while allowing you to plant negro slavery here, the only just reason must be that it was a small thing to plant slavery here, and a much bigger thing to elect Governors. Was it so in fact?

Which have you found to be the greater matter of the two? Here you have had five Governors chosen for you, and it is very doubtful if you who hear me can remember the names of half of them. They are gone, hardly leaving a single trace in Kansas, or having done a single thing that can help or hurt you in the vast, indefinite future. That, my friends, is about the size of your Governor question. But now look at your slavery question. If your first set-

tlers, believing slavery all right, while you think it all wrong, had got 5,000 slaves planted here on your free soil, you never could have got your free constitution. The owners of these 5,000 slaves would have been as good as the rest of you, and, being rich, would perhaps have had more influence. You would not wish to destroy their property; and would not know what to do with this human property if they were set free. All the rest of your property would not have paid for sending 5,000 free negroes to Liberia; but you could have got rid of 500 Governors, not to mention five, much more easily. Which then is the bigger and safer question, the slave issue or the Governor issue?

So much for my Kansas hearers. But I have hearers from Missouri, too, this night; and I have a few words for you of Missouri. You say that we have made this slave issue more prominent of late years, and are to blame for that. We deny it. It is more prominent, but we say it was you who made it so. The good old policy of Washington, Jefferson, and Henry Clay was not good enough for you. You must have a change of policy: Slavery must be called right instead of wrong. We say the only way of treating human slavery is as a wrong. You don't like that, and you don't like the Kansas situation; well, if you do not, why not go back to the good old policy? But you say our success as Republicans will destroy our sacred Union. How so? Do we Republicans declare against the Union? Not at all. It is you who say: "If these black Republicans choose a President, we won't stand it;" you will then break up the Union. What! Do you really think it right to destroy it rather than see it administered as Washington and Jefferson did? You have elected your Presidents and we submitted; if we elect one, our duty will be to make you submit.

Isn't that fair? Old John Brown thought slavery wrong, as we do; he attacked contrary to law, and it availed him nothing before the law that he thought himself right. He has just been hanged for treason against the State of Virginia; and we cannot object, though he agreed with us in calling slavery wrong. Now if you undertake to destroy the Union contrary to law, if you commit treason against the United States, our duty will be to deal with you as John Brown has been dealt with. We shall try to do our duty.

Surely this was plain speech; but it showed what Lincoln in a calm and level mood thought of the scene, local and national,

as it lay spread out before him. Two weeks later we find Herndon writing his last letter to Theodore Parker, who was in Rome and reported to be improving in health, but was in fact still deeper in the grave. He, too, has somewhat to say about John Brown, in whose wild and daring escapade he sees a red signal of civil war, while for the first time in his letters he names Lincoln among the possibilities for the Presidency. It is, in its way, a remarkable letter:

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 15, 1859.

Friend Parker.

Dear Sir: — It has been a long time since I wrote to you, and though I have not done so I have not forgotten you. I, in *spirit*, was with you on the Antilles, where the great hero broke the chains of his people; was with you in the Alps — in Switzerland; and now I follow you to Rome, where Brutus's dagger gleamed bright against the despotism of Cæsar. Though this is true, I am still amidst such a glaring, heavy, hot and angry despotism that the blood runs cold, and almost crystallizes. Such a heavy, haughty despotism the world never saw. We are verging towards a Civil War, or a peaceable disunion. I do not want to see or feel either, but voice and arm are too weak to stay the tide. What God's providence announces in the logic of sweeping events, I cannot control, and have no arrogant desire to do so. "Let God's will be done," and I am content.

Since your departure from America much has been done, that makes the heart hope, and much that forces the soul to despair. All through the South the "fanatics" are driving out all good men. Let this, too, go on uncontrolled; it will force on the indolent, indifferent, there, as well as North, the necessary laws of human thought — the ideas of human rights; it will drive good men northward; it is Nature's providence, wiser, too, than our little philosophies and logics; and it will bring on the great issue, high as heaven, as deep as hell.

John Brown's raid in Virginia has somewhat awoke us to the "irrepressible conflict" — has roused us to the greatness and grandeur of America's coming events; his death has sent a thrill of horror through the American world. His deeds are sweeping from the great tall heads to the mass of our people. You have no idea of the influence of John Brown's acts. We do not approve the deeds, though we deeply sympathize with the man and his motives. Poor old

John Brown: he was good and great and *is* immortal — will live amidst the world's gods and heroes through all the infinite ages. "*I still live*" of John Brown will ever ring along heaven's blue domes of the future. As the Masons say, "So mote it be."

Wendell Phillips made a most glorious speech in Beecher's church[1] a few weeks before the execution of Brown: it was polished, chaste, eloquent; it was a living thing, breathing out fire and defiance. Corwin says it was the finest thing he ever heard; he was on the stand at the time Phillips spoke. Phillips has made one or two other speeches on John Brown and his times. His speeches, I understand, are for the present rolled up — their publication delayed on account of the insolvency of the Boston firm who were to publish the speeches. I am sorry for this, for I wanted to read and study them. To show you the interest felt in John Brown, no less than three biographies are proposed to be issued. So mote that be, too.

Whilst I am speaking of books, let me say that the world is "asleep" on the publication of good new books. Europe is no better in this particular than America. I understand that Emerson is soon to publish a new work called "The Conduct of Life." I hope, I know, it will be good.

Now for squabbling politics. There are several good men spoken of for President — among them are Seward, Chase, Banks, Lincoln, Bates, Bell, etc. I have a letter now in my hand from Philosopher Greeley: he says he is for Bates of Missouri, and Read of Pennsylvania. Greeley is getting quite conservative: he is a timid man; he is willing to agitate for an idea during its abstract state, but he shudders when it is about to concrete itself amidst living events, human conditions, social, religious, or political. He *will not do* for a great leader of America's present events: he will do to lead in small and unimportant events, political or social; but not where absolute principles will squeeze out blood, if necessary, to get themselves applied; he is fine for theoretic principles — not heaven-high ones applied. Greeley is, however, an honest man and I still like him somewhat.

[1] It should not be inferred from this that Beecher approved of the methods of John Brown. Beecher was not, strictly speaking, an Abolitionist, but a constitutional anti-slavery reformer of the school of Lincoln. — *Henry Ward Beecher*, by Lyman Abbott, pp. 152-194 (1903). But Phillips had been denied an audience room in the city, and Beecher, as a friend of free speech, threw open the doors of Plymouth Church. — *Life of Beecher*, by J. H. Barrows, pp. 191-2 (1893).

The Republicans in Congress are grinding off the flesh from their knee caps, attempting to convince the Southern men that we are cowards. We are cowards, that is, our Representatives are. But here, friend, if a man makes me bite the dust to get what is my due, or to get a favor, when I do arise from my humiliation I rise with clenched fists, hitting my tyrant with a quick back-slap. This is the law of our nature, and look out, distant in the future, for this law in its application. I feel like I wanted to scorch off the disgrace of our kneeling, whining cowardice. The people must be educated.

The South is now catechizing the North. To this question, "What is the true end of man?" it stands and shiveringly answers, "The chief end of man is to support the nigger institution, and to apologize to despots!" I might turn out to be a coward, if I were in Congress: but I think, if I were asked that question, I should say, "Resistance to nigger-drivers — individual tyrants — is fealty to man and obedience to God." The Senators are all on their knees. So are the Representatives. Let them shrive themselves there, and mankind will avenge the humiliation in the future. This is God's constant mode of operation. The race will pull the trigger which the individual refused to touch. God will cry to the race, "Fire," and it will fire. We will then apologize upward.

Senator Douglas is backing down to the command of the slave driver, and Kellogg, of Illinois, is after Greeley and Douglas for *their* conspiracy to beat Lincoln. Let the facts come. Human history is a great magnet held up and swung over facts, drawing them up, sticking them logically amidst the world's great and small events. Garrison, I fear, is not doing much. He is, however, always firm, and as you once said to me, "I have no more fear of Garrison than of the shrinkage of the world's granite ribs, holding us up." The North is gradually being educated in ideas and *in arms*. Instinct and nature drive them to prepare. I want peace; but if God says otherwise — "so mote it be." Are you writing your great book in Rome? How are you and how does old Rome look? I hope you are well.

Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

IV

On February 25, 1860, Lincoln arrived in New York City to deliver his speech at the Cooper Institute. It was Saturday,

and he spent the whole day in revising and retouching his address, for he was a believer in the inspiration of last moments. On the Sabbath he attended worship at Plymouth Church, and after the sermon dined with Henry Ward Beecher at the house of a friend.[1] While walking alone in the afternoon he looked in upon a mission Sunday-school where he was invited to talk to the children who, whenever he made a movement to stop cried out, "Go on! Oh, do go on!" As he rose to depart, the leader, asking the name of his visitor, was surprised to hear the answer, "Abraham Lincoln of Illinois."[2] On Monday he wandered about the city to see the sights, and in a book-store, where he stopped to get a book ordered by Herndon, he met George Bancroft. When the committee waited upon him to escort him to the Institute, they found him dressed in a sleek and shining suit of new black, creased and wrinkled from having been packed too closely and too long in his little valise. Whether he was more abashed by his new surroundings or his mussed suit, it was hard to tell.

When he reached the Institute he faced "the intellect and culture" of the city, as the *Tribune* said, David Dudley Field escorting him to the platform, where William Cullen Bryant presided. Horace Greeley, former Governor King, and other notable men sat beside him. For the first few moments, as he afterwards said, he was sure that nobody saw anything but the wrinkles in his clothes, and his recalcitrant coat collar which flew up every time he made a gesture. But he soon forgot himself and his address was, as well in its character as in its results, one of the most important of his career — though some still agree with the orator himself that his speech at Peoria, in 1854, was his best. Owing to a heavy snow-storm the Cooper Institute was not full, and the audience was so busy

[1] *Life of Beecher*, by J. H. Barrows, pp. 245-6. After the Cooper Institute address the following evening, Lincoln was Beecher's candidate for the Presidency. — *Henry Ward Beecher*, by Lyman Abbott, p. 222 (1903). It may be added that the story, so often told, that Lincoln spent a night with Beecher in his home during the dark days of the war, is a legend.

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, p. 213 (1866).

taking his measure that it quite forgot to applaud. Lincoln had foreseen this, and his address was a calm, lucid, searching survey of the great issue in all its branches, intended to appeal to the mind of educated man whose interest was keenly alive.[1] As such it was a model, thorough without affectation of learning, exact without the usual stiffness of dates and details, often compressing into a single plain and simple sentence the thought and research of years.

For his text he chose the words of Senator Douglas: "Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now." Since all indorsed these words, his inquiry was as to what understanding the fathers had of the slavery issue, how they dealt with it, and what they meant should be the end of it. Then followed an elaborate historical argument, which amounted to a demonstration, showing that the fathers regarded slavery as a wrong and had placed it, as they thought, in course of ultimate extinction. Seldom has there been a more lucid exegesis of the Constitution or a more effective application of its principles and spirit to the affairs of a later time. Nor has there ever been a more earnest exhortation to the nation to return to the landmarks set up by the fathers of the republic.

> Let all who believe that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now," speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask — all Republicans desire — in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an

[1] For the story of this speech, and the speech itself with valuable notes carefully edited, see *Abraham Lincoln*, by G. H. Putman (1909). Mr. Horace White remarks: "I chanced to open the other day his Cooper Institute speech. This is one of the few printed speeches that I did not hear him deliver in person. As I read the concluding pages of that speech the conflict of opinion that preceded the conflict of arms then sweeping upon the country like an approaching solar eclipse, seemed prefigured like a chapter of the Book of Fate." — *Lincoln in 1854*, pp. 21-22 (1908). Greeley said that he never listened to a greater speech, although he had heard several of Webster's best.

> evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it, be, not grudgingly, but fully and fairly maintained. . . . All they (the South) ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. . . . It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great Confederacy shall be at peace and in harmony, one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them, if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. . . . Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.

Here was the conciliatory spirit of the Henry Clay Whig, a lover of the Union willing to compromise everything except the moral wrong of slavery; not the Abolitionist, still less an advocate of a mystical "higher law." As has been true of all great reformers, at least in the earlier stages of their careers, his ideals were more frequently in the past than in the future, and he made plea for a pruning of gross abuses, a reverting to the healthy simplicity of by-gone times. Like Shibli Bagarang in the George Meredith story of *The Shaving of Shagpat* — published in 1856 — he proposed a friendly and conservative shave of the Slave Despot. True to the nature of tyranny, the Slave Power waxed exceeding angry, until its face was as red as a berry in a bush; but when at last Shagpat had to be thoroughly and radically shaved, our Shibli was equal to the task.

The New York papers printed the speech in full, Bryant, of the *Evening Post*, expressing the wish that he had more material so interesting with which to fill his columns. The *Tribune*, as it explained, omitted only "the tones, the gestures, the kindling eye and the mirth-provoking look" — which is news, indeed, for in its printed form there is no glint of mirth. In his speeches in New England, whither he went to visit his son Robert, then at Phillips Exeter Academy, he improvised at

the moment on the theme of the Cooper Institute address, with repeated emphasis upon the fact that John Brown was not a Republican, but a lonely, misguided enthusiast. He mixed a deal of inelegant anecdote with dashes of local color, especially at Hartford where he was induced to take sides in a strike then in progress in the local shoe factories; and it was like him to take the side of the workers.[1] On the whole, such scraps as remain of his speeches made on this tour reconcile us to the fact that they were not reported in full.

But he was now, in a very real sense, a national figure. Men were inquiring about him, and his Illinois friends urged him to give the word and let them set to work for his nomination for the Presidency. "What's the use of talking about me whilst we have such men as Seward, Chase, and others?" he said to Jesse Fell, who sought data for a biography. Finally he admitted that he would like to be President, "but there is no such good luck in store for me," he said. "Besides, there is nothing in my early history that would interest you or anybody else." Fell pleaded, and for his benefit Lincoln wrote that remarkable "Autobiography," describing himself as derived from one of the "second families," and his story as a

[1] Surely the superlative absurdity is the attempt to make Lincoln appear in the guise of a Socialist. Even his prediction about the danger to the country from the power of "corporations" and capitalists, rests upon a hypothetical letter which has not been produced — though, in view of the inflated values and wild extravagance of war times, he would have been justified in making it. — *Social and Industrial Conditions During the War*, by E. D. Fite (1910). Carl Marx divined in him a "single-minded son of toil" who, in any contest between man and dollars, would take the side of men. — *Life of Marx*, by J. Spargo, p. 225 (1910). But Socialists have no monopoly of that feeling. Lincoln's words about the rights of property, and capital, make ridiculous the effort of that cult to claim him. He looked forward to the time when no slave would return to unrequited toil, and each family would own its own homestead, subject to no lien, except taxes. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by R. H. Browne, Vol. II, p. 638 (1907). His vigorous individualism was, however, always balanced by a feeling of human solidarity, and both were transfigured by that social imagination, so marked a trait in him, out of which was born his mystical and prophetic vision of the union. — *Abraham Lincoln*, by H. B. Binns, pp. 144, 352 (1907).

THE WIGWAM AT CHICAGO IN WHICH LINCOLN WAS NOMINATED.

page torn from "the short and simple annals of the poor." At last, urged by his friends — Davis, Swett, Logan, Palmer, Herndon, and others — he let his name be used for the highest office, and was quietly occupied during the spring with that wire-pulling at which he was so adept. Once in the race, he was as vigilant as he had been reluctant, and left no stone unturned, even writing to other States in quest of delegates.[1] He went, as a spectator, to the State convention at Decatur on May 9th, and was given a rousing indorsement. When a banner was borne in, inscribed "Abraham Lincoln, the rail Candidate for President in 1860," supported by two weather-beaten fence rails decorated with ribbons, "from a lot of 3,000 made by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks in the Sangamon Bottom, in the year 1830," the convention went wild. Of course, Lincoln had to make a speech, and the State delegation, the list of names having been approved by him, was instructed to "use all honorable means" to secure him the honor.

One week later the National Convention met at Chicago, in a large two-story frame building, called, without apparent reason or propriety, the "Wigwam," erected for the purpose at the corner of Market and Lake streets. This was the first time any great party had convened its national assembly in the West, and it was a notable gathering. Even the *Times*, the Douglas organ, complimented a body which contained such men as Evarts, Thurlow Weed, Greeley, Giddings, Ashmun,

[1] Among those to whom he wrote was the notorious Mark Delahay of Kansas, offering to furnish $100 to bear his expenses to Chicago in case he was appointed a delegate. These letters were given in the Herndon and Weik biography (Vol. II, pp. 68-9), but the name of Delahay was omitted. Years later Senator Ingalls refused to believe that Lincoln had any dealings with Delahay until he saw the actual letters, and even then he could hardly believe his eyes. After he was elected Lincoln consulted Delahay about appointments in Kansas, appointing Delahay himself Surveyor-General. — *Life of John Brown*, by F. B. Sanborn, p. 184 (1910). Lincoln was not squeamish in such matters, nor was he always a good judge of men. It is probable, however, that he did not know what manner of man Delahay was, for he had no ear for local political gossip.

Wilmot, Corwin, Blair, Andrews, Boutwell, and others of equal fame. In these despites, it was soon evident that there would be the usual display of electioneering arts, the usual bargaining, and more than the usual uproar.[1] Seward was the most eminent man of the party and its natural candidate, and his friends, led by the astute and experienced Thurlow Weed, seemed to have everything their own way. Lincoln had only the support of Illinois, and even some of the Illinois delegation personally preferred Seward;[2] but he had a chance if Seward did not win on the first ballot.

Lincoln headquarters were at the Tremont House, five blocks from the Wigwam, and his friends worked "like nailers," as Oglesby said. David Davis, Stephen T. Logan, Leonard Swett, Norman Judd, Jesse K. Dubois were leaders, with W. H. Herndon as the personal representative of his partner. They opened a political huckster shop and began to dicker for votes, having the aid of Greeley, who was in favor of "anybody to beat Seward," and he thought Edward Bates, of Missouri, was the man to do it. Herndon and Koerner did much to argue him out of that notion in favor of Lincoln. By dextrous trades and promises the Lincoln men secured the Indiana delegation, while the Seward forces were parading with banners and bands. Dubois telegraphed to Lincoln that they could get the Cameron delegates from Pennsylvania if they might promise Cameron a cabinet position. Lincoln replied: "I authorize no bargains and will be bound by none." Not content with this, he sent a copy of the *Missouri Democrat* to

[1] There are many descriptions of the Chicago convention. For a contemporary account, see *Conventions of 1860*, by Murat Halstead; for the workings of the platform committee, see *Reminiscences*, by Schurz, Vol. II, pp. 175-86 (1909); for the German influence, see *Memoirs of Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 84-93 (1909); for the causes of the defeat of Seward, see *Autobiography of Weed* (1884), and *Life of Seward*, by F. Bancroft, Vol. I, pp. 520-45 (1900); and the biographies of Lincoln, especially Arnold and Whitney who were present. Seward men attributed their downfall to Greeley, who had a grudge against their candidate, but Greeley said that his influence was exaggerated. — *Recollections of a Busy Life*, p. 390 (1869).

[2] *Lincoln, and Men of War Times*, by A. K. McClure, p. 23.

Herndon with three extracts from Seward's speeches marked, and on the margin of which he had written, "I agree with Seward's 'irrepressible conflict,' but do not agree with his 'higher law' doctrine. *Make no contracts that will bind me.*"

> Everybody was mad, of course. . . . What was to be done? The bluff Dubois said: "Damn Lincoln!" The polished Swett said, in mellifluous accents: "I am very sure if Lincoln was aware of the necessities —" The critical Logan expectorated viciously, and said, "The main difficulty with Lincoln is —" Herndon ventured: "Now, friend, I'll answer that." But Davis cut the Gordian knot by brushing all aside with: "Lincoln ain't here, and don't know what we have to meet, so we will go ahead, as if we hadn't heard from him, and he must ratify it." The Cameron contingent was secured for Lincoln on the second vote.[1]

On the third day, when the balloting was to take place, while the Seward men were parading the Lincoln men filled up the Wigwam, and their rivals had hard work to get in. Two men with voices like fog-horns, hired for service, had been placed at strategic points, instructed to yell for Lincoln when B. C. Cook, who sat on the platform, took his handkerchief from his pocket. Evarts nominated Seward, and there was loud and prolonged cheering. But when Norman Judd named Lincoln there went such a series of yells as had never been heard before, low rates on the railroads having brought thousands of men from all over the State to the city for that specific purpose. The Seward howlers, led by Tom Hyer the pugilist, were dismayed. Several States nominated "favorite sons" — Dayton of New Jersey, Cameron of Pennsylvania, Chase of Ohio, Bates of Missouri, Collamer of Vermont, McLean of Ohio — but the real contest was between Seward and Lincoln. On the first ballot the vote stood, Seward 173½, Lincoln 102. Thousands of men were keeping count, and on the second ballot the votes of Cameron came to Lincoln by agreement, which with other changes made the result, Seward 184½, Lincoln 181. The third ballot gave Lincoln 231½, which brought him within one and a half votes of the nomination. Where-

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. C. Whitney, p. 289 (1907).

upon David Cartter changed four votes from Chase to Lincoln, and he was the nominee. Evarts, of New York, moved to make it unanimous, and the brass cannon on the roof of the Wigwam thundered the salute which set the city wild with joy. After naming Hannibal Hamlin for second place, the convention adjourned, and at every station as the delegates went home there were tar barrels burning, boys carrying rails, and guns, great and small, banging away.[1]

Lincoln had played ball most of the day, perhaps to work off the intense excitement that possessed him. Early in the afternoon he went to the telegraph office to await the outcome of the first ballot. It was evident that he was encouraged by the result. Soon news of the second ballot arrived, and he showed by his manner that he regarded the contest as won. He went with Charles Zane to the *Journal* office, and it was there that he received the final news of his high call, with a calmness not untouched with sadness. Looking at the telegram a moment, he said, "There is a little woman down on Eighth street who will be glad to hear this news," and strode away to tell her. In Washington Douglas was saying, "There won't be a tar barrel left in Illinois tonight!"

V

As for the Democracy, it was now "a house divided against itself," built apparently upon sand and tottering to a fall. The Southern wing nominated John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, on a radical pro-slavery platform, while the Northern wing named Douglas, on a platform of "popular sovereignty" — thus fulfilling the prediction of Lincoln, that the Senator would have "the pill of sectionalism crowded down his own throat." As if to make confusion worse confounded, John Bell, of Tennessee, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts — the "Kangaroo Ticket," as it was called, because the "hind legs were the longest" — were put forward by a class of gentlemen some of whom thought slavery was right, and others of whom thought it wrong, but all agreeing that the trouble came

[1] *Conventions of 1860*, by Murat Halstead, p. 154.

of talking so much about it. So they presented a policy of "keep still and do nothing," anticipating an opinion held even in our day "that quite as much harm may be done by preaching the ten commandments as by violating them." [1]

Notable was the tour of Senator Seward, despite his profound grief at losing the high prize, which has broken so many hearts.[2] His speeches in the West, which he had not visited since he became famous, were gems of eloquence and tact, remarkable in that, while dealing with one theme, they exhibited a kaleidoscopic variety of arrangement and phrase. His journey was one prolonged ovation. Equally notable was the canvass of Senator Douglas, who was the first man seeking that high office to take the stump in his own behalf. To many it was a humiliating spectacle, but his vigor, spirit, and eloquence disarmed critics, and he spoke in most of the free, and in many of the Slave States, striking at Breckenridge on one side and Lincoln on the other, as representing sectionalism, while he assumed that he carried the banner of the Union. The "Wide Awakes," with their caps and oil-cloth capes and torch lights, marched to huge rallies, where wagon loads of decorated rails were the symbols of a man whose life-story appealed to the imagination of the nation. Yet below the noise and glare of the hour there was a solemn undertone of serious thought, of earnest questioning, of mingled hope and dread, as befitted a nation on the verge of a great ordeal. Herndon was active on the stump, and while speaking one day in October he received a note from his partner, written in a tremulous hand, informing him that Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio were safe. He read it to the crowd, and so great was the joy that the speech was never finished.

With a divided opposition, the election of Lincoln was almost a foregone conclusion, but by a sectional vote. He carried every Northern State except New Jersey, where Douglas had tried the trick of fusion and won three of its electoral votes. Of the total electoral vote of 303, Lincoln received 180,

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by F. W. Lehmann, p. 20 (1908).

[2] *Life of Seward*, by F. Bancroft, Vol. I, pp. 545-50 (1900).

which gave him a majority of 57 over all his opponents. Douglas got only seven, three from New Jersey and four from Missouri. Bell carried the States of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, with 39 votes, and Breckenridge all the Southern States and the border States of Delaware and Maryland, giving him 72 votes. The total popular vote, except South Carolina, whose electors were chosen by the Legislature, was 4,680,193. Of these Lincoln received 1,866,452; Douglas, 1,375,157; Breckenridge, 847,953, which, with the vote of South Carolina was increased to 900,000; and Bell had 590,631. So that Douglas, who was second before the people, was lowest in the electoral college. Lincoln won over 26,000 votes in the border States, but not a single ballot in the South, and he failed by 474,000 of getting a majority of the popular vote. An ominous result; a divided North, with a majority against slavery, against a practically united South in favor of slavery.

During the campaign Lincoln remained quietly in Springfield, where the Governor's rooms in the State House were placed at his disposal, and there he met his callers, talked and joked, while preserving a sphinx-like silence. Wary and discreet, he wrote very little, and when embarrassing questions were asked he told a story or had his secretary, John G. Nicolay, make a stereotyped reply, referring to his record and his speeches. "If they will not hear Moses and the prophets," he wrote to William Speer, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Some of the abuse heaped upon him gave him pain, for it was bitter to the point of brutality, especially in the Southern papers. Perhaps nothing gave him more sorrow than the attitude of the Springfield preachers: for of the twenty-three in town, twenty were against him.[1] "These men well know," he said, "that I am for freedom, and yet with this book" — the New Testament — "in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all."

No sooner had the vote been cast than Springfield became a

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, pp. 236-39 (1866).

mecca for newspaper men, would-be biographers, and a horde of hungry office-seekers. The number of "original Lincoln men" became a multitude, giving their idol a foretaste of what he had to expect. Gentlemen with light baggage and heavy schemes came in deputations and delegations from all quarters and the hotels were jammed. Lincoln and Artemus Ward saw no end of fun in this motley procession, and it was the fun that saved him. For, with the government in weak, if not hostile hands, and threatening chaos in the South, where anger flashed like lightning, this time of waiting was trying in the extreme.[1] He was busy at cabinet making betimes, which was no easy task in view of the material with which he had to work. Often he would escape from the crowd and drop into the old office and have a chat with Herndon, and talk over affairs of business and state. He asked his partner to furnish some books to be used in writing his inaugural address — the speech of Henry Clay in 1850, the proclamation of Jackson against Nullification, and a copy of the Constitution; and later, Webster's reply to Hayne, which he regarded as the masterpiece of American eloquence. With these he retired to a dingy back room across from the State House, and wrote that address in which firmness blended with a half-sad gentleness.

Old New Salem friends called to see him, and more than one brought up the memory of Ann Rutledge whose image he still kept in his heart, wrapped in the sweet and awful sadness of the valley of shadows. He slipped away to visit the grave of his father, and rode to Farmington, in Coles County, to see his aged step-mother who was still living. Amid such scenes of farewell, and the kindly greetings of old and dear friends, a

[1] An incident of these trying days was an exchange of letters with Alexander Stephens, of Georgia. Stephens had made a speech before the Legislature of his State in favor of the Union, and Lincoln sent for a copy of it. Stephens sent the address, and with it a friendly letter reminding Lincoln of his solemn responsibility in time of peril. To which Lincoln replied, "for your eye only," asking if the people of the South really thought that he had any inclination to interfere with slavery in the States. Stephens respected the confidence until after the death of his friend. — *Life of Stephens*, by L. Pendleton, pp. 165-6 (1907). Also, *Constitutional View of the War*, by Stephens, Vol. II, p. 266 (1870).

gloom as of the grave overshadowed, reviving the premonition, of which he had talked to Herndon as early as 1843, that some violent end was to overtake him at last. The last afternoon before he left for Washington was spent with Herndon in the office, in which they had toiled, and planned, and dreamed together. He locked the door, and after going over the cases, concerning which he had certain requests to make, and a few suggestions as to methods of procedure, they talked as old comrades. Lincoln asked his partner if he wanted any office, and, if so, to name it. Herndon wanted no office, except that of bank examiner which he then held, and Lincoln said he would speak to Richard Yates, the incoming Governor, in his behalf. Mr. Herndon writes:[1]

> After these were all disposed of he crossed to the opposite side of the room and threw himself down on the old office sofa, which, after many years of service, had been moved against the wall for support. He lay for a few moments, his face toward the ceiling, without either of us speaking. Presently he inquired, "Billy" — he always called me by that name — "how long have we been together?" "Over sixteen years," I answered. "We've never had a cross word during all that time, have we?" to which I returned a vehement, "No, indeed we have not." He then recalled some of the incidents of his early practice and took great pleasure in delineating the ludicrous features of many a law suit on the circuit. It was at this last interview in Springfield that he told me of the efforts that had been made by other lawyers to supplant me in the partnership with him. He insisted that such men were weak creatures, who, to use his own language, "hoped to secure a law practice by hanging to his coat-tail." I never saw him in a more cheerful mood. He gathered up a bundle of books and papers he wished to take with him and started to go; but before leaving he made the strange request that the sign-board which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway should remain. "Let it hang there undisturbed," he said, with a significant lowering of his voice. "Give our clients to understand that the election of a President makes no change in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon. If I live I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 193-5.

right on practicing law as if nothing had ever happened.'' He lingered a moment as if to take a last look at the old quarters, and then passed through the door into the narrow hallway. I accompanied him downstairs. . . . Grasping my hand warmly and with a fervent ''Good-bye,'' he disappeared down the street, and never came back to the office again.

CHAPTER IX

The Later Herndon

I

It is not designed to give a detailed account of the life of Mr. Herndon, but only such part of it as had to do with his great partner and friend. So much of his time, however, was spent first in clearing away misunderstandings of Lincoln before he entered office and afterward, and later in gathering and recording facts for a just and true appraisement of him, that the record is unusually rich. The story has thus a double interest and value, not more for its disclosure of interesting items about Lincoln than for its revelation of the same loyal and self-effacing friend, doing what he could to uphold the hands of his partner while living and standing guard over his memory after death. Such a task was a boon in those lonely later years, when he needed something to divert attention from the going down of the sun.

Hardly had the result of the election been announced than Herndon began a labor which, though unobtrusive and natural, entitles him to our grateful regard. Lincoln, it should be remembered, had never held an executive office, and no one knew what powers he had for such an untried service. His ideas were well known, and his personality had become somewhat familiar through the press, especially in the admirable sketches of him by Scripps and Howells; but his capacity for executive leadership no one knew — not even Lincoln himself. Even in ordinary times there would have been some curiosity as to what so inexperienced a man would do, and in view of the startling events which followed in the wake of the election, it was natural that this curiosity should deepen into a profound anxiety. Not only a new man, but a new party was coming into power, and the national sky was dark and angry.

During the campaign, party interests as well as manly impulse had led the Republicans to belittle the Southern threats of disunion. There had been such threats before, and it suited their purpose now to regard them as so much braggadocio indulged in for political effect. Lowell called the talk of secession a "Mumbo-Jumbo" that might frighten old women but that did not disturb the stock-market. Greeley declared that the South could no more unite upon such a wild scheme than a company of lunatics could conspire to break out of bedlam; while W. T. Sherman, who was a shrewd observer and, in 1860, a resident of Louisiana, advised his brother to "bear the buffets of a sinking dynasty, and even smile at their impotent threats." [1] Douglas, it was thought, had exaggerated the perils of electing Lincoln, whose victory he foresaw from the first. Small wonder, then, that a pall fell over the North when one after another of the Slave States went out of the Union, and hoisted alien flags. Secession swept the South, not without violence used to crush hesitation and dissent, for the revolution was the work of a minority, as revolutions usually are. As the plot thickened, many who had helped to manœuvre the rail-splitter into office began to wonder whether, after all, he was the man for such an hour.

From far and near letters began to pour in upon Herndon, as the man who knew Lincoln better than any one else, asking what manner of man his partner was. Lincoln's task was one that might easily bewilder and appall: before him was disunion; behind him were fear and fainting hearts; around him was treachery. But Herndon knew that, whatever his skill in executive art, he had the qualities most in request for the hour — unbending firmness and loyalty to principle, unshakable courage, unwavering integrity, and a caressing human sympathy. His letter in reply to Senator Henry Wilson is typical of many that he wrote during those awful days of suspense, remarkable at once for its insight, its analysis, and for its faith in his partner:

[1] *Life of Seward*, by F. Bancroft, Vol. I, pp. 551-2 (1900).

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 21, 1860.

Hon. Henry Wilson.

Dear Sir: — I know Lincoln better than he knows himself. I know this seems a little strong, but I risk the assertion. Lincoln is a man of heart — aye, as gentle as a woman's and as tender — but he has a will strong as iron. He therefore loves all mankind, hates slavery and every form of despotism. Put these together — love for the slave, and a determination, a will, that justice, strong and unyielding, shall be done when he has the right to act — and you can form your own conclusion. Lincoln will fail here, namely, if a question of political economy — if any question comes up which is doubtful, questionable, which no man can demonstrate, then his friends can rule him: but when on Justice, Right, Liberty, the Government, the Constitution, and the Union, then you may all stand aside: he will rule then, and no man can move him — no set of men can do it. There is no failure here. This is Lincoln, and you mark my prediction. *You and I must keep the people right; God will keep Lincoln right!* Yours truly, W. H. Herndon.

Wilson still had his doubts, but years later he wrote to Herndon admitting that his prediction had come true to the letter. Lincoln at that moment was being tested to the supreme degree, by his own party. Congress, finding disunion a fact, fell upon its knees, and offered the slave owners boundless concessions. It was ready to give slavery new guarantees of extension, to make the fugitive slave law more severe, to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, to admit New Mexico with a slave code, and even to place slavery beyond the reach of constitutional amendment — thus making it, so far as law could make it, eternal. Such a resolution passed both houses of Congress. As Mr. Blaine remarks, it would "have entrenched slavery securely in the organic law of the land."[1] Compromise was the order of the day, and even Seward seemed to tremble in silence. The Crittenden plan would have cut off the head of the Republican party, and yet such papers as the Albany *Journal* and the New York *Times* "began to perform the famous feat of St. Denys, walking and also talking with sev-

[1] *Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 258-274 (1884).

ered head held in the hand."[1] Lincoln had advocated compromise in years gone by, and had been almost the last man to give it up, but now he would have none of it. His letters during this ordeal show what granitic firmness was in the man:

> To Kellogg he wrote: Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery. The instant you do, they have us under again; all our labor is lost, and sooner or later must be done over. The tug has come, and better now than later.
>
> To E. B. Washburne: Prevent, as far as possible, any of our friends from demoralizing themselves and our cause by entertaining propositions for compromise of any sort on slavery extension. There is no possible compromise upon it but which puts us under again, and leaves all our work to be done over again.
>
> To J. P. Hale: If we surrender, it is the end of us and of the government. They will repeat the experiment upon us *ad libitum*. A year will not pass till we shall have to take Cuba as a condition upon which they will stay in the Union.

This was the last desperate effort of the Slave Power to threaten, cozen, and bribe both the friends of the Union and the enemies of slavery; but Lincoln stood like a rock. What Herndon feared was that, at the very last, the standard of the party, which he had fought to hold aloft, would be lowered by ignominious cowardice, and that Lincoln would have his hands tied when he entered office. The very thought of it made his heart quiver with indignation and fear. Hence his letter to Senator Trumbull, breathing intense feeling, while expressing his contempt for the office-seekers who besieged him for notes of recommendation:[2]

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by D. J. Snider, p. 480 (1908).

[2] This letter is part of a long correspondence between Mr. Herndon and Senator Trumbull — for they were intimate friends — beginning in 1856 and continuing until 1866, which, by the kindness of Messrs. Horace White and J. W. Weik, is now in my possession. It resembles the correspondence with Parker, dealing with the same ideas and scenes, but less elaborately, as it was unnecessary to describe the situations to Senator Trumbull. The letters have the same vividness and animation, but are less valuable as pictures of the period. It seems, however, that

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 9, 1861.

Friend Trumbull.

Dear Sir: — I want to say one or two words to you. I am bothered to death to sign petitions, applications, *supplications* for office by greedy, hungry, ravenous office-seekers who, many of them, were never known to the Republicans till now. I am *forced* to give some kind of letters, etc., but let me say to you, that all they are intended for is *simply politeness* and not recommendations. Be not governed by anything which I may say by way of simple politeness. If I really want a man appointed I will say it out and out. I have signed no petitions as yet — except Bunn's and — I forget the other. Keep what I say in mind.

Are our Republican friends going to concede away dignity, Constitution, Union, Laws, and Justice? If they do I am their enemy — *now and forever.* I may not have much influence, but I will help to tear down your Republican party and erect another in its stead. Before I would buy the South by compromises and concessions to get what is the people's due I would die — rot and be forgotten willingly. Let me say to you that if the Republicans do concede anything more than the South has already got — namely, her constitutional rights — the Republican party may consider death as the law. Your friend, W. H. Herndon.

When Lincoln at last grasped the reins of State with his powerful hands, Herndon breathed easily, knowing, as he said in his vivid way, that "the 'gates of hell cannot prevail' to make him lower either the flag or the ideal." He took up his business affairs with new heart, assured that with such a pilot the ship was safe, whatever storms might roar. Shortly after the inauguration he visited Washington —"to see how Lincoln looked in the White House"[1] — and found the President furrowed and worn with care. One sentence of Lincoln's he recalled: "Billy, I hope there will be no trouble; but I will make the

Trumbull once believed that Douglas intended to become a Republican, but was soon disillusioned of his belief.

[1] The first Mrs. Herndon died in August, 1860, and one year later Mr. Herndon married Miss Anna Miles. While paying addresses to her he conceived the idea of advancing his interests by securing a minor office for her brother. Lincoln saw the point and made the appointment. Of course, this was not his chief errand to the capital.

South a graveyard rather than see a slavery gospel triumph, or successful secession destroy the Union!'' Both spoke kindly of Douglas, who was now showing that, despite his partisan sophistry in other days, he had a great patriotic heart. They talked a while of the old office, the clients, and the town, and the dark tide of war rolled between them once more.

At last Lincoln and Douglas, so long rivals, if not enemies, were of one mind and one heart. Old animosities were forgotten in their common and high consecration to the Union. No sooner had Lincoln arrived in the capital, before the inauguration, than he was closeted with Douglas, to whom he seems to have read his inaugural address.[1] On the day of its delivery Douglas stood by the side of his former opponent, and when Henry Watterson, a young reporter, put out his hand to take the high hat of Lincoln, Douglas took it instead and held it during the ceremony, while the aged Judge Taney, who wrote the Dred Scott decision, inducted into office the man who was to make that opinion forever null and void.[2] It was a simple, artless act, but a symbolical one, and its significance was not lost. When a shell burst over Fort Sumter, on April 12th, Lincoln and Douglas were cemented in one common aim. From that day on, they were in frequent consultation, and the sorely tried President was grateful for the grip of so strong a hand. Late at night, April 14th, Douglas heard Lincoln read his call for 75,000 men, and suggested that the number should be 200,000; for he, at least, did not underrate the chivalry and valor of the South.[3] At once he offered his services to the President, willing to go or stay where he could do the most good. Lincoln asked him to go to Illinois, where his voice was

[1] *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson, p. 464 (1908).

[2] *The Compromises of Life*, by Henry Watterson, p. 153 (1903).

[3] ''Virginia,'' he said to his friends, pointing towards Arlington, ''over yonder across the Patomac, will become a charnel-house. Washington will become a city of hospitals, and churches will be used for the sick and wounded. This house, 'Minnesota Block,' will be devoted to that purpose before the war is ended.''—*Life of Lincoln*, by I. N. Arnold, p. 193 (1884).

like a bugle, and unify the State.[1] There was a quick hand-grasp, a hurried farewell, and they parted to meet no more. His speeches on the way were pitched in a lofty, patriotic key, and his address before the Legislature of his own State was one of the greatest of his life — putting to shame the devices of John A. Logan.[2] It was with strange and mingled feelings that Herndon listened to his old enemy speaking in behalf of Lincoln and the Union.

At Chicago Douglas was welcomed as never before. Friend and foe alike joined in paying tribute to the partisan who had emerged into a patriot, and his speech in the Wigwam, where Lincoln was nominated, was memorable. There he used his famous epigram: "There can be no neutrals in this war; *only patriots — or traitors.*" An undertone of pathos was heard in his words, as he pleaded that the war be conducted in a humane spirit, for he remembered the home in the South still dear to him, where the mother of his boys had played as a girl. Not long afterward he fell ill, but even in his delirium he was battling for the Union: "Telegraph to the President and let the column move on." He died on June 3rd, in the prime of life, at the age of forty-eight. Grief at his passing, when his life was so valuable, was profound and sincere.[3] Chicago was draped in mourning when, with almost royal pomp, his remains were laid to rest beside the lake.[4]

[1] There was a rumor, which persists to this day, that Lincoln intended to take Douglas into his Cabinet, or else give him a high military position; but no one knows the truth of it. — *Anecdotes of Famous Men*, by J. W. Forney, Vol. I, pp. 121, 226 (1873).

[2] "I heard Mr. Douglas deliver his speech to the members of the Illinois Legislature, April 25, 1861, in the gathering tumult of arms. It was like a blast of thunder. I do not think it is possible for a human being to produce a more prodigious effect with spoken words. . . . He was standing in the same place where I had first heard Mr. Lincoln. That speech hushed the breath of treason in every corner of the State." — Horace White, *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, pp. 126-7.

[3] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, p. 359 (1869).

[4] "It was a fitting resting-place. The tempestuous waters of the great lake reflect his own stormy career. Yet they have their milder

Amidst rising and falling hope, victory and disaster, joy and gloom, the war raged. The story of Lincoln during those years was the story of his country, and need not be repeated here. Few realize, however, what opposition Lincoln had to encounter, politically, in 1864. Sherman had entered Georgia where there was constant fighting, but without decisive results. Grant was determined to pound Richmond into powder, if it took all summer. Volunteering had almost ceased. Draft after draft had been ordered, and taxes had increased terribly, while an immense debt was piling up — a million dollars a day. Anti-war Democrats declared the war a failure, and were making capital out of it. In the Cabinet, and among the higher officers discarded by the President, there were rivals. Arnold, himself an ardent friend of Lincoln, admits, in his book, *Lincoln and Slavery*, that a majority of both Houses of Congress, and the leaders of the metropolitan press, were against the President. Koerner returned from Spain, whither he had gone as minister, and found the German leaders in revolt, but not the people.[1] At one time Lincoln gave up all hope of a second term, and looked forward with joy to his release, for he was thin and worn and care-weary — so much so that Greeley doubted whether he would have lived out another term.[2] But, despite the bickerings of politicians, his patience, wisdom, and fidelity held the people as with hooks of steel. They agreed with his homely saying, that "it is not wise to swap horses while crossing a stream," and they refused to swap.

Herndon wrought valiantly in the campaign of 1864, speaking almost incessantly and with unusual eloquence and power. His relations with Lincoln gave an added prestige and impressiveness to his words, and while he did not parade the fact of his partnership, his tones betrayed his reverence for the gentle, incorruptible, magnificent manhood of the man who was his friend and his President. The sum of it all had been stated

moods. There are hours when the sunlight falls aslant the subdued surface and irradiates the depths." — *Stephen A. Douglas*, by Allen Johnson.

[1] *Memoirs of Koerner*, Vol. II, pp. 408-9 (1909).

[2] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, p. 407 (1869).

by Senator Doolittle, in his brief but unforgetable speech· "I believe in God and Abraham Lincoln!" No partisan pettiness could stand against such a sentiment of blended admiration and gratitude, soon to be lifted almost to worship by the awful apocalypse of tragedy. Lincoln was triumphant, and the Confederacy, now only a hollow shell, collapsed on every side. As Greeley said, others might have restored "the Union as it was," but God gave the one leader who, by his wisdom, patience, and courage, restored it free of the stain of human slavery; "leaving to such short-sighted mortals as I no part but to wonder and adore."[1]

Six days after the surrender of Lee, amid the joy of victory, Lincoln fell — dying for his country as truly as any soldier who fell fighting in the ranks. On that day, by an act of insanity, the prostrate, bleeding South lost her best and wisest friend, and the only man strong enough and kind enough to have saved her from that ordeal of re-destruction, which was far worse than the war. He was for forgiveness, mutual reconciliation, and brotherly love, but his dream was not to come true. No words can describe that Easter Sunday when the nation, dumb with grief and rage, took down the festoons and arches, celebrating the end of the war, and replaced them with the draperies of sorrow. Even his enemies understood Lincoln at last in the hour of his transfiguration, and his long, strange funeral procession homeward was a sad ovation of love and loyalty. Farmers could be seen from the car window, dim figures in the night, watching the train sweep by, waving farewell.

At the meeting of the Springfield bar on the day that Lincoln died, held in the court-house in which he had practiced so long, a number of lawyers delivered eloquent addresses. Last of all came Mr. Herndon, who spoke of his exalted virtues, of his great intellectual capacity, of his clear moral perceptions, of his wonderful sagacity, and, with trembling voice, of his kind heart. In closing he spoke with deep emotion of the good feeling and good will that always existed between them. On

[1] *Recollections*, by Horace Greeley, p. 409 (1869).

May 3rd, the casket was borne to the State House — to the Representative Hall, the very chamber in which, in 1854, he had delivered his first great speech against the evil of slavery. Mr. Herndon describes the scene:

> The doors were thrown open, the coffin lid was removed, and we who had known the illustrious dead in other days, before the nation had laid its claim upon him, moved sadly through and looked for the last time on the silent, upturned face of our departed friend. All day long and through the night a stream of people filed reverently by the catafalque. Some of them were his colleagues at the bar; some his old friends from New Salem; some crippled soldiers fresh from the battle-fields of the war; and some were little children who, scarce realizing the impressiveness of the scene, were destined to live to tell their children yet to be born the sad story of Lincoln's death. At ten o'clock in the morning of the second day, . . . the vault door opened and received to its final rest all that was mortal of Abraham Lincoln.[1]

II

Again a stream of letters poured in upon Mr. Herndon, asking for reminiscences, facts, and items about Lincoln, whose life-story appealed to the imagination of the nation. Newspaper men, biographers, and magazine writers visited and interviewed him, and he was always willing to tell them what they asked to know.[2] Much time and labor were thus spent in seeking to set his great friend in a proper light before the public. Ready writers came to Springfield, just as they do now, and after spending a few days, went away and wrote elaborately, informing the world of the life, character, and genius of Lincoln. Such performances disgusted Herndon, since these

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, 283.

[2] Among a number of Herndon manuscripts, now in my hands, is one entitled "Statement: a Memorandum, Jan., 1886" which gives a list of the biographies to which he contributed time, energy, and facts: those by Holland, Barrett, Lamon, Arnold, the *Memorial Album*, and others. These men could hardly have written their books without his aid but they give him little credit. He does not attempt to keep trace of the number of interviews with journalists, while his correspondents were almost without number.

facile scribes sought rather to confirm an idealized popular conception than to know the truth. Eulogy of this sort annoyed him because it belittled Lincoln, in that it praised him without discrimination for attributes which he did not possess, while leaving out of account his really great qualities.

With the hope of counteracting this tendency, Mr. Herndon delivered a number of lectures on Lincoln in Springfield during the winter of 1865-6. They were somewhat crude as to art, for he lacked the polish of a man of letters, but they bore every mark of accuracy, veracity, and insight, as over against the sentimental apotheosis then going on. They were reverent and faithful portrayals of Lincoln, of his humble beginnings amidst primitive surroundings, of his early habits, tendencies, and aspirations, of the struggle and sorrow whereby he became a man, of the qualities of his mind, with its blend of abstract thought and practical sagacity, of his political ambition and shrewdness, and finally of his patriotic statesmanship. The third address, which was a description of Lincoln and an analysis of his intellect, afterwards served as the closing chapter of his biography, and it remains a classic to this day. Besides, he wrote articles for the Chicago *Tribune* on various aspects of the life of Lincoln, correcting errors and setting forth the man as he knew him.

These articles, with excerpts from his lectures, went the rounds of the press, and he was severely censured by many. Some, Arnold, for instance, wrote urging him to desist, lest the enemies of Lincoln pervert the facts to the injury of his fame. Others insisted that Herndon was so close to the stump that he could not see the size of the tree, and still others regarded him as an embittered man who was slandering the dead. In spite of all fears, he labored without rest in the faith that the real Lincoln was greater than the fictitious image of popular fancy, and that the more vividly he was revealed the more secure his memory would be. Oddly enough, for years there were those who thought that he had turned traitor to his friend and was engaged in besmirching a great, a revered memory, as if the plain story of Lincoln were a slander. Others dismissed him

as a man of no sensibilities, of gross taste, a peddler of gossip, unworthy of notice. If any such remain, let them read these words from a letter written in reply to such a complaint in 1866:

> I wish to address you as a man of good judgment, and good taste. To my own knowledge Lincoln has for thirty years been led by God through a fiery furnace, heated white hot. By this purifying process of God he has been broadened and deepened in his sympathy and love for man, has been made more liberal, more sympathetic, more tolerant, more kind and tender — *the noblest and loveliest character since Christ.* His qualities and characteristics were developed, if not created, by that fiery furnace journey, and yet timid men, false friends, would rob him of his crown to keep up a fancied ideal in their own little minds. I shall not aid in that crime by robbery of the tomb and fame of Lincoln!
>
> Some men say that Lincoln was a tender man, and yet they do not wish to know and learn how he was made so. He was President of the United States, and yet men do not want to know what made him President. I say to you that sympathy aided — strongly and visibly aided — to make him the ruler of a great free people. Where did he get his sympathy for the black man, the low bred and oppressed? In God's fiery furnace, and yet you will not hear of it! Lincoln was God's chosen one — His special man — His great-hearted man for America and her times. God tested him by leading him through the fiery furnace.
>
> I have thought about all these things, have analyzed myself — what I know and the facts — and have determined my course. I know what I am doing.[1]

Surely these were not the words of a morose and embittered man who had betrayed the memory of a friend. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, had Mr. Herndon not taken his stand in behalf of the unvarnished truth, continued his labors, and endured the censure heaped upon him, the true Lincoln would now be more than half hidden from our view. He recalled the fate of Washington at the hands of Weems, who turned a man of high and tender humanity into a stiff and colorless statue, not a man but a marble image. "Such an image, built up by

[1] Ms. letter to Mr. Hickman, Dec. 6, 1866.

falsehood and suppression, is a sham, a lie, and a fraud," which Lincoln, who loved the truth, would repudiate. If his enemies were eager to belie him, that was all the more reason why his friends should be alert to tell the truth, "sift the facts *here and now*," lest vague and shadowy rumors float into the future. Arnold wrote, not without a touch of satire, regretting that Herndon should feel that the fame of Lincoln rested in his hands, pleading that some of the facts, which Lincoln left unexplained, be left in the silence of the grave. Herndon replied:

> Is any man so insane as to suppose that any truth concerning Lincoln will be hid and buried out of human view? Folly! The best way is to tell the whole truth and let it burn up lies. Lincoln is above reproach, thank God; let no one fear to have all the truth about him brought clearly to light. I do not deal in "gossip," and will not. Lincoln's reputation does not rest in my hands, nor *exclusively* in yours. What you so fear is that some fact, left unexplained by Lincoln, will be uttered by me. If you dread that, you had better burn up your books: because nearly all of Lincoln's life is such a state of facts. . . . No man explains all he does, not one tenth of it. He leaves most of his acts in obscurity. Some men do not "blow their own horn," and where they are great, noble, national men, let us blow their horns for them. Mr. Lincoln was an ambitious man, struggled for the Presidency, and reached it, yet he left many of his motives, purposes, desires in the dead silence. Shall we not tell the truth about them simply because he was too modest, and too sensible, to "blow his own horn?" He made his great house-divided-against-itself speech, and yet he never wholly explained to any mortal man why he did it. Shall we not inquire into the reasons? You and I are left for that very duty, and let us do it.[1]

Just when Mr. Herndon formed the idea of writing a biography of Lincoln, is not known; but it was almost certainly before his partner became President. His editorial in the *Sangamon Journal* describing the speech delivered by Lincoln at Springfield, October, 1854, gives a hint of such a purpose. At least,

[1] Ms. letter to I. N. Arnold, Nov. 30, 1866, by the kindness of J. W. Weik.

we find him making notes of the doings and sayings of his partner as early as 1856, and when Lincoln died Herndon seemed to be the only man who had a complete and chronological file of his speeches, with the places and dates of their delivery. More than once he wrote to Lincoln in the White House asking for copies of his speeches. No doubt Lincoln suspected some such purpose on the part of his junior partner when in 1858, after trying to read the *Life of Edmund Burke*, he gave his opinion of biographies which made heroes of men.[1] In an introduction to one of his lectures in 1866 Mr. Herndon explained, in part at least, why his biography of Lincoln had been delayed, and those reasons became more urgent as the years went on:

> My pecuniary condition will not let me rest. Duty holds me sternly to my profession. I cannot drop these duties, spurred on by necessity, as I am, to sit down and finish the *long contemplated life of Mr. Lincoln.* I am compelled to work slowly, but what I shall lose in speed I shall gain in value and certainty of record. I owe to man the facts and the story which shall become, I believe, not through me, as to artistic beauty, one of the world's most classic stories. I wish to perform my duty honestly and truthfully. I do not wish to injure the dead, nor to wound the feelings of any living man or woman. I want only truth, and am deeply interested to have facts known exactly as they are, truthfully and substantially told.

Happily there were those who saw what he was trying to do and had faith not only in his good judgment, but in his good taste as well. All felt that the biographies so far published — those by Holland and Barrett — while admirable in many ways, considering the short time since the death of Lincoln, were, as one critic remarked, "simply histories of Mr. Lincoln's time, and not carefully written reflections of the domestic and inner life of the man himself." Others were promised, including a large work by R. D. Owen, and a history of *Lincoln's Administration*, by I. N. Arnold, besides a collection of *Anecdotes of the Late Abraham Lincoln*, by C. G.

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 147.

Leland. After mentioning these forthcoming volumes, the Philadelphia *Bulletin*, April 1, 1866, has this to say of Mr. Herndon and his work:

> The reader has probably perused a portion at least of those admirable lectures on the late Abraham Lincoln, by Mr. Herndon, which were so extensively published in the newspapers, and so generally commented upon as presenting remarkable and highly original reflections and descriptions. As it may be inferred that Abraham Lincoln would not have been for twenty years associated with a man of only ordinary capacity, it was not astonishing that these lectures should indicate in Mr. Herndon a genius of no ordinary kind. His description of Mr. Lincoln's personal appearance has become the standard and universally accepted *word-portrait* of the original, while his anaylsis of the mind and disposition of his subject, indicated a very rare combination of delicate examination and a strict conscientiousness, allied with a happy appreciation of all that is characteristic and interesting. Mr. Herndon has, as the public will be glad to learn, determined to give us a good life of Mr. Lincoln — personal, social, domestic, religious, and legal — as the possession of a vast amount of facts and illustrations (far transcending that held by any other man) will enable him to do. Of his ability to set his material forth in a vividly interesting form, his lectures are the best guarantee, as well as the fact that for a large portion of the incidents relative to Lincoln's early life now current, the public were originally indebted to Mr. Herndon — a truth which the writer of these remarks infers not only from the frequent mention of Mr. Herndon's name as authority for many interesting *Lincolniana*, but from the mere circumstance that no other man so curious in matters of biography was so thoroughly conversant with the subject.
>
> It has been well observed that posterity may afford the best biographers of a man's public life; but for his early career, we must depend on those of his own time. To this early career of Lincoln, previous to his life at Washington, Mr. Herndon has devoted great attention, and collected a vast amount of exceedingly rich material, which will set forth "Father Abraham" as a living personality, talking to the reader at his fireside, gravely or quaintly discussing his law office, and presenting, in fact, so much of every thing which is not known of the subject as could be anticipated from a writer of Mr. Herndon's sagacity and collective dis-

position, aided by twenty years of the most intimate personal relations.

One of the enthusiasms of Mr. Herndon was his admiration for the pioneers, their achievements and sayings. Any one who spoke slurringly of the early settlers, especially of Illinois, many of whom he knew, was sure to provoke his ire. For example: one writer remarked, speaking of Thomas Lincoln, that when "inefficient men become uncomfortable they are likely to try emigration as a remedy," and that a good deal of "the spirit of the pioneers" was simply a "spirit of shiftless discontent." How unjust this was to the pioneer in general, and to Thomas Lincoln in particular, no one has shown with more earnestness and eloquence than Mr. Herndon did in his lecture entitled, "Abraham Lincoln, Miss Rutledge, New Salem, Pioneering, and the Poem" — a lecture as remarkable in its contents as in its title.[1] The lecture has not been widely published, except in part, and this may excuse the length of the excerpt to follow; the more so as it portrays the background against which the early life of both Lincoln and Herndon must be seen. It was delivered in 1866, and contained, besides the first recital of the romance of Lincoln and Ann Rutledge, an astonishing wealth of nature lore. Herndon knew the town of New Salem, its scenery and its people, and the place was dear to him for its memories of Lincoln not less than for its natural beauty. Some liberty has been taken in arranging the passage, which is an admirable specimen of the vivid, virile style of the writer:

As I sit on the verge of the town, I cannot exclude from my memory the forms, faces and voices of those I once knew so

[1] Parts of the lecture appeared in the papers ot the time and created a flurry of comment, some surmising that Herndon himself had been a suitor for the hand of Miss Rutledge. This, of course, was untrue. But the display of nature lore was indeed remarkable, some of its passages being floral processions to an accompaniment of bird-song. My thanks are due to the Illinois Historical Society for its use, though a small edition of the lecture has recently been published (1910). The "Poem" referred to in the title was the piece, a favorite with Lincoln, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

well. In my imagination, the little town perched on the hill is astir with busy men, and from the country come men and women afoot and on horseback, to see and be seen. Oh, what a history! Here it was that bold roysterer met and greeted roysterer; bumper rang to bumper, and strong friend met friend and fought friend. Here it was that every newcomer was initiated, quickly and rudely, into the lights and mysteries of Western life. They were men of no college culture, but they had their broad, well-tested experiences, good sense and sound judgment, and if the stranger bore well his part he at once became, thenceforward, a brother of the clan forever. This is not a fancy picture. It existed as I have told it, and Lincoln had to pass it. He did it nobly and well, and held unlimited sway over the clan. . . . Such a people the world never sees but once, and such a people! I knew them all; have been with them all, and respect them all. This is the ground on which Lincoln walked, sported, joked and laughed, studied surveying and grammar, read for the first time Shakespear and Burns, and here it was that he loved and despaired. The spirit of New Salem is to me lonely and yet sweet. It presides over the soul gently, tenderly, yet sadly. It does not frown. It does not crush. It entices and enwraps.

Four distinct waves or classes of men have followed each other on the soil we daily tread. The first was the Indian. The second was the bee and beaver hunter, the embodied spirit of Western pioneering — wandering gypsies of the forests and the plains. This original man was tall, lean, cadaverous, sallow, shaggy-haired; his face was sharp and angular; his eyes small, sunken, inquisitive, and piercing. He wore a hunting shirt made of soft buckskin, buckled tightly about his body. His moccasins were of the very best buck. He never tired, was quick, shrewd, powerful, cunning, brave, and cautious. He was shy, nervous, and uneasy in the villages. He dreaded, did not scorn, our civilization. . . . See him in the wilds, as I have seen him, strike up the loose rim of his hat, that hung like a rag over his eyes, and peer keenly into the distance for Indian or deer. Overtake him and try to hold conversation with him, if you can. He was stern, silent, secretive, and uncommunicative — a man of deeds, not speech. His words were of one syllable, sharp nouns and active verbs mostly. He was swifter than the Indian, stronger, and had more brains. This man was bee-hunter, trapper, and Indian fighter. . . . Is fire inefficient in its heat? Is lightning inefficient in its

activity? If so, we may admit that these were inefficient men!

The third class was composed of three distinct varieties of men, coming as a triple wave. The first was the religious man, a John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness; the second was the honest, hardy, thrifty, active, economical farmer; and the third class was composed of the wild, genial, social man — a mixture of the gentleman and the rowdy. They were a hospitable class of men, had no economy, cared only for the hour, and yet many of them grew rich. It was impossible to hate them, and impossible to cheat, whip or fool them. They gave tone and caste and character to the neighborhood, in spite of all that can be said. These men, especially about New Salem, could shave a horse's mane and tail and offer him for sale to the owner in the very act of inquiring for his own horse. They could hoop up in a hogshead a drunken man, they themselves being drunk, and roll the man down New Salem hill. Yet they could clear a forest of Indians or wolves in a short time; could trench a pond, ditch a bog, erect a log house, pray and fight, make a village or create a State. They would do all for fun, or from necessity — do it for a neighbor — and they could do the reverse of all this for pure, unalloyed deviltry. They attended church, heard the sermon, wept and prayed, got up and fought an hour, and then went back to prayer, just as the spirit moved them. These men — I am speaking generally — were always true to women — their fast friends, protectors and defenders. There were scarcely any such on the globe for this virtue. Though these men were rude and rough, though life's forces ran over the edge of its bowl and sparkled in pure deviltry, yet place before them a man who needed their aid, a woman, a widow, or a child, then they melted into sympathy and charity, quick as a flash, and gave all they had, and toiled willingly or played cards for more.

It is not necessary for me to defend Thomas Lincoln. It is not necessary that I should flatter the pioneer. It is admitted that all men emigrate from their homes to new lands in the hope of bettering their conditions, which at home are sometimes chafingly uncomfortable. The pioneers did not go to the wilderness always in lust of land; they went to satisfy their souls. The spirit of pioneering is not a spirit of "shiftless discontent," nor any part of it, but is the creating spirit; a desire to rise up in the scale of being; the Spirit of God moving in the hearts of men as on the face of

> the waters. Good men and tender women do not, from a spirit of "shiftless discontent," quit their homes and the sacred ashes of their dead, and rush into an unsettled wilderness, where they know they must struggle with disease, poverty, Nature, the wild wolf and wilder men. They go at God's command. . . . The pioneers were not inefficient men. They had energy and creative activity, with capacity, honesty, and valor. Their children can point with pride to the deep, broad, magnanimous foundations of these States created by them.
>
> My defense is ended. The red man has gone. The hunter has gone, the wild animals treading closely on his heels. He and they are gone, never to return. As path-makers, blazers, mappers, they had their uses in the divine plan. The rollicking roysterer is still among us, though tamed by age into a moral man. They were succeeded by the Armstrongs, the Rutledges, the Greens, the Spears, the Lincolns, who have their uses in the great Idea. A fourth class have come among us seeking fortune, position, power, fame, having ideas, philosophy, gearing the forces of nature for human uses, purposes and wants. They come from the East, from the Middle States, from the South; they come from every quarter of the globe, full-grown men. Here are the English and the German, the Scotch and the Irish; here and there and everywhere is the indomitable and inevitable Yankee, victorious over all. Thus we come and go, and in coming and going we have risen up through force, cunning and the rifle, to the dollars, the steam engine, and the Idea. We have moved from wolf to mind. We have grown upward, outward, higher, and better, living in more virtue, less vice, freer and purer. So are the records of all time!

As an example at once of native eloquence and social insight, as a defense of the pioneer and a picture of the background whence the newer West evolved out of the old, this passage is worthy of remembrance. Both Lincoln and Herndon lived and grew midway in that transition, and strange lights and shadows blended in their natures. Of Southern origin and Northern spirit, they belonged to an order of men peculiar to the great West, as unlike the psalm-singing, witch-hunting Yankees of the East as the slaveholding, sport-loving feudal lords of the far South. Had it not been for these men, and others of their kind, the Union would have gone to pieces in a

conflict between forces so alien, so unrelenting, and so extreme. Sound of body, clear of mind, generous and humane of heart, they united abstract thought with practical sagacity, and hard-headed realism with the spirit of poetry.

III

Among other visitors entertained by Mr. Herndon was George Alfred Townsend — better known as "Gath," his pen-name — correspondent, lecturer, and poet. He came to Springfield to lecture, and having two days of leisure he spent one half of each talking to Mr. Herndon about his famous partner. The result was an article entitled "The Real Life of Abraham Lincoln: A Talk with his Late Law Partner," which appeared in the New York *Tribune*, dated January 25, 1867. It included, among other things, the following description of Mr. Herndon, his office, and his library:

> Until very lately you might have read upon a bare stairway, opposite the Court House Square, the sign of "Lincoln & Herndon." A year ago it gave place to the name of "Herndon & Zane." Ascending the stairs one flight, you see two doors to your right hand. That in the rear leads to what was for a generation the law office of the President. Within, is a dismantled room, strewn with faded briefs and leaves of books; no desks nor chairs remaining; a single bracket of gas darkened in the center, by whose flame he whom our children's children shall reverently name, prepared, perhaps, his gentle, sturdy utterances: and out of the window you get a sweep of stable-roofs, dingy back-yards and ash-heaps. As simple an office, even for a country lawyer, as ever I saw in my life, it is now in the transition condition of being prepared for another tenant.
>
> In the middle of the room the future President sat at a table side, and in the adjoining room the table and all the furniture of the place is still retained, while in the back corner, looking meditatively at the cylinder stove, you see Mr. Herndon. He resembles Mr. Lincoln so much, and in his present quarters, garb, and worldly condition, is so nearly a reproduction of "A. Lincoln, lawyer," that we may as well take a turn around the surviving man and the room. How young Herndon might have looked twenty-five years ago we can scarcely infer from the saffron-faced, blue-

black haired man before us, bearded bushily at the throat, disposed to shut one eye for accuracy in conversation, his teeth discolored by tobacco, and over his angular features, which suggest Lincoln's in ampleness and shape, the same half-tender melancholy.

"Mr. Lincoln," said Mr. Herndon, "cared so little about clothes that he sometimes did not put all of them on. He was brought up barefoot." Mr. Herndon, by parallel, wears to-day a bright yellow pair of breeches, turned up twice at the bottoms, and looks to be a wind-hardened farmer, rather than one of the best lawyers in the State, and, as a public man, is charged with delivering the best stump speeches in Illinois, on the Republican side, during the late election. His address is homely in form, commencing with, "Friend, I'll answer your question;" and this he does without equivocation, with his long fore-finger extended, and with such a fund of new information upon the revered memory in question that although the Lincoln biographers, from Holland up, have talked with him, he seems to be brim-full of new reminiscences. With an extraordinary memory, great facility of inference, and a sturdy originality of opinion, he had the effect upon me to stagger all my notions of the dead President.

He has been a wonderful desultory reader, and in his law library you may see the anomalous companions for a prairie attorney of Bailey's *Festus*, Kant's *Critique*, Comte's *Philosophy*, Louis Blanc, and many of the disobedient essayists. He has one of the best private libraries in the West, and in this respect he is unlike Mr. Lincoln, who seldom bought a book, and seldom read one.

After the death of Lincoln, with other disasters "following fast and following faster," Mr. Herndon seemed to lose interest to some extent in human affairs, particularly in politics and in the law as a science. He retired to his farm a few miles from Springfield, still keeping his office in town until Mr. Zane, his partner, was elevated to the bench. In farming, however, he was a failure, but he took great delight in his garden in which he cultivated specimens of all the wild flowers in Illinois. An outlay of money for farm improvements just before the panic in the early seventies, plunged him into financial distress, forcing him to lose a part of his splendid library;

and the disappointment exposed him to the assaults of his old infirmity of drink. By selling copies of his Lincolnana to W. H. Lamon for $2,000 he recovered himself, and turned his attention to the raising of various sorts of fruits. This venture proved to be successful and he soon found himself on more solid footing. Through it all he kept a brave heart, despite occasional lapses, and he was never a man to trouble others with his misfortunes. Lincoln students continued to visit him, some of them staying for weeks at a time, for he was as generous with his time as with his vast store of materials. One regrets to record that some of these scribes — if one may not call them Pharisees — forgot to give him due credit for his aid, often parading his materials as the fruits of their own researches.[1]

In July, 1873, an article appeared in *Scribner's Monthly* reporting a lecture on "The Religion of Lincoln," by the Rev. J. A. Reed, who described himself as the "defender of the Christian faith of Lincoln." Mr. Reed, who had once been pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Springfield, was one of the few ministers whom Lincoln had liked as a man, and his lecture, brought out no doubt by the statements made in the Lamon biography,[2] created no little stir. It was claimed that Lincoln, just before leaving Springfield for Washington, had made an examination of the evidences of Christianity, and had intimated to the writer his acceptance of the faith, if not of the theology, of the orthodox church. Of course there was joy in evangelical circles. Some rejoiced to learn that Lincoln, before his death, had attained to saving faith, while others hastened to add his name to the list of eminent indorsers of Christianity. Sceptics sneered at the idea that Lincoln had

[1] The Ms. "Statement: a Memorandum," by Mr. Herndon, dated 1886, now in my hands, gives a partial list of those whom he assisted in this way. Names need not be mentioned; but if these men, instead of belittling Mr. Herndon, as some of them did, had confessed their indebtedness to him, it would have been more in accord with the amenities of life. Herndon himself uttered no complaint against them.

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, pp. 486-504 (1872).

been in danger of being lost and had been rescued by a creed which, strangely enough, seemed to be in need of his signature.[1]

Herndon, who had been accused of writing the Lamon biography, was on his feet at once, and never did his truth-loving spirit shine more brightly than in the midst of this nauseating furore. Reviled by pietists for telling the truth about the early rationalism of Lincoln, and beseiged by crude "free-thinkers" who could not be made to see his growing spirituality, he was betwixt two fires. The better to clarify the air, he delivered a lecture in Springfield on the "Later Life and Religious Sentiments of Lincoln," which, though somewhat too combative in tone, was a lucid statement of the truth in the case. Had Lincoln held the orthodox creed Herndon would have been the first to divulge the fact, and to defend it; but such was not the fact, and he refused to permit a coterie of men to canonize him in that faith. Nor did he credit the idea that Lincoln, while harassed by office-seekers at home and watching the gathering chaos at Washington, had devoted his time to an examination of Christian evidences. No doubt he was subdued to a prayerful mood by what lay before him, but the cast of his mind did not admit of such a rapid and radical change of view as had been claimed. What Herndon insisted upon was that Lincoln should not be made to appear other than he really was, and for this insistence he deserves the thanks of all right-thinking men.

No one could doubt that Lincoln was a man of deep religious nature, which had been refined, as Herndon said, in "God's fiery furnace," but he was never orthodox in his views. He was in fact a theist, if not a fatalist, in belief, and by the very

[1] Of course Dr. Reed did not foresee the wrangle which his lecture precipitated. No one knew better than he that Christianity, as Emerson said of beauty, is its own excuse for being, its own ineffable evidence. If its humane and heavenly genius does not persuade men, neither will they be convinced by a list of notable names. If in his own mind Dr. Reed distinguished between the spirit of Jesus and the various forms of dogma, in his lecture he did not make the distinction clear; and therein lay his error. That familiar distinction clears the air at once, and had it been kept in mind there would have been no haggling over the religion of Lincoln.

terms of his philosophy, which he held to the end, he rejected the idea of miracles, upon which orthodox theology rests. Dr. Reed had made the mistake, so common among ministers during the life of Lincoln, and to which so many are wont to cling to this day. Misled by the courteous and sincere sympathy of the President for all faiths worthy of respect, he mistook a native poetic religiousness for belief in the dogmas which in his own mind were identified with religious feeling. Though a man of Christ-like spirit, if ever there was one, Lincoln did not accept the dogmas of the Confessions of Faith.[1] But whatever he thought of those dogmas, he practiced as few men ever did the most difficult Christian virtues, even amid the wild hell of war.

After Mr. Zane ascended to the bench, Mr. Herndon formed a partnership in law with Mr. Alfred Orendorff [2] — afterward Adjutant General of Illinois — which continued for fifteen years. During the last years of their partnership Herndon was not often in the office — where indeed he had little to detain him — but spent his time on his farm, and in going hither and yon in quest of new materials for his biography of Lincoln. Many of his manuscripts, written at this time, are now before me, and they show a tireless industry, a passion of accuracy, and a profound reverence for his old friend and partner. He was happy in his work, deeply interested in current politics — having become a rampant free-trader — with recurring outbursts of almost boyish enthusiasm. Occasionally he delivered

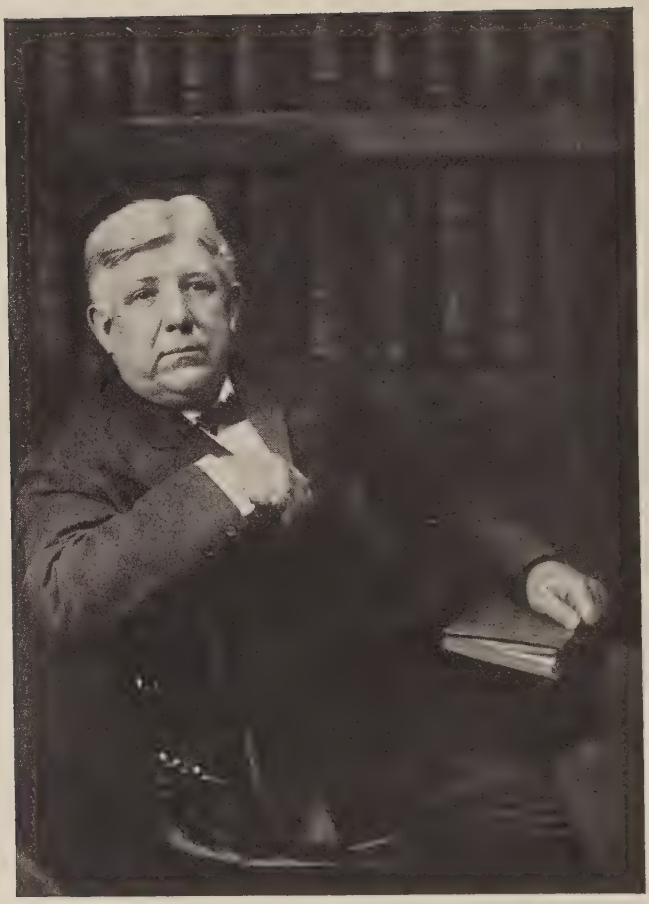
[1] "I have never united myself to any church," said Lincoln to H. C. Deming, "because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christion doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confession of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of the Gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul." — *The Inner Life of Lincoln*, by F. B. Carpenter, p. 190 (1869).

[2] General Orendorff was a brilliant and lovable man, prominent for years in Illinois, in the legal fraternity, in politics, and in military circles. He died in Springfield in 1909.

lectures on Lincoln, one especially at Petersburg, among the old friends of the dead President, which was greatly enjoyed.

Along in the early eighties he met Jesse W. Weik, who was studying Lincoln, and together they planned and wrote "the long contemplated biography," which finally appeared in three volumes in 1889. Much of the writing was done by Mr. Weik from copious notes furnished by Mr. Herndon, who was now far advanced in years and too infirm for the drudgery of writing the three volumes. Unfortunately the firm of Bedford & Clark failed soon after the book appeared, and the hopes of Mr. Herndon were all but dashed to pieces. Besides, he was deeply wounded by certain critics who, though they had never seen Lincoln, wrote as if they knew more about him than the man who had been his partner for many years. Cast down but not destroyed, he planned a new edition of the biography, and was fortunate in securing the aid of Mr. Horace White who wrote a notable chapter descriptive of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. The new edition, with important alterations, omissions, and additions, was published by D. Appleton & Company, but alas, as fate would have it, Mr. Herndon did not live to see his dream come true. It appeared in two volumes in 1892, with a brief introduction by Mr. Horace White in which we read these words, every syllable of which is true:

> What Mr. Lincoln was after he became President can be best understood by knowing what he was before. The world owes more to William H. Herndon for this particular knowledge than to all other persons taken together. It is no exaggeration to say that his death removed from earth the person who, of all others, had most thoroughly searched the sources of Mr. Lincoln's biography and had most attentively, intelligently, and also lovingly studied his character. . . . Their partnership began in 1843, and it continued until it was dissolved by the death of the senior member. Between them there was never an unkind word or thought. When Mr. Lincoln became President, Mr. Herndon could have had his fortunes materially advanced under the new Administration by saying the word. He was a poor man then and always, but he chose to remain in his humble station and to earn his bread by his daily labor. . . . As a portraiture of the man Lincoln — and this is what we look for above all



Jesse W. Weik

things in a biography — I venture to think that Mr. Herndon's work will never be surpassed.

IV

While engaged in preparing the biography — without whose aid it would never have been written — Mr. Weik came to know Mr. Herndon intimately and to admire him for his sturdy honesty, his lofty motives and his passion for truth. Writing of Mr. Herndon as he knew him, Mr. Weik gives the following discriminating estimate of the man, noting at once his strength and his obvious limitations.

> My acquaintance with Mr. Herndon began soon after my graduation from college in the seventies. I had gone to Springfield to study Lincoln and met Herndon for the first time in the dingy room which he and his partner had occupied for an office. From this time forward I was destined to share, to the end of his days, the confidence and close association of this rare man and generous friend; and shall never cease to be thankful for the affinity that grew up between us. From Herndon I learned how to measure Lincoln, to dissect his moral structure and analyze his mental processes. No other man ever lived who knew as much about the immortal Railsplitter, who comprehended him so thoroughly, who had dug so deep and laid bare the springs of action, the motives that animated his "clear head, brave heart, and strong right arm." With implicit and almost fanatical devotion Herndon clung to Lincoln, and we do not have to go far to find evidence that the latter, throughout all the memorable and tempestuous times that made him great, bared his heart and soul to "Billy" Herndon with all the candor and confidence of a brother.
>
> His unvarying and inflexible devotion to the truth was the predominating trait in the character of William H. Herndon. In this respect he resembled his illustrious companion. Both men, up to a certain point, were very much alike. But there was a difference. Lincoln, deeply cautious and restrained, was prone to abstract and thoughtful calculation. Herndon, by nature forceful and alert, was quick, impulsive and often precipitate. If he detected wrong he proclaimed the fact instantly and everywhere, never piling up his wrath and strength as Lincoln did for a future sweeping and crushing blow. He never stopped to calculate the force,

> momentum or effect of his opposition, but fought at the drop of a hat, and fought incessantly, pushing blindly through the smoke of battle until he was either hopelessly overcome or stood on the hill-top of victory. Younger than Lincoln, he was more venturesome, more versatile, and magnificently oblivious of consequences. Conscious of his limitations he knew that he was too bold, too extreme to achieve success in politics, and he therefore sunk himself in the fortunes of his more happily poised partner. . . . When, in the days yet to come, the searchlight of truth is turned on the picture, posterity will be sure to accept the verdict of Herndon's friends, that he was a noble, broad-minded, honest man; incapable of a mean or selfish act, brave and big-hearted; tolerant, forgiving, just, and as true to Lincoln as the needle to the pole.[1]

During the last year of his life, while preparing the second edition of his biography of Lincoln, Mr. Herndon wrote frequent letters to Mr. Horace White, who was assisting him. By the kindness of Mr. White those letters are now before me, and they are interesting as so many glimpses of the writer in his last phase, as well as for a number of valuable and curious bibliographical facts which they reveal. Again and again he refers to the crusade for tariff reform then going on, and other movements of contemporary politics in which he was deeply interested, but these matters may be omitted. Only excerpts need be given:

> April, 1890: In reply let me say that I never wrote a page, paragraph, sentence, or word for Lamon's *Life of Lincoln*, and never suggested to him any course or method to be pursued in his book. I sold to Lamon for $2,000 a *copy* of my manuscripts of the Lincoln records, facts which I had gathered up in 1870-1. Lamon used my name, I suppose, to give his book some popularity. If what facts and opinions he got from me were stricken out of his book there would not be much left of it, as I think. The reason why Lamon did not finish the second volume was because of a three-cornered fight. Lamon and Black had a quarrel about the book, and they had a quarrel with their publishers. Lastly, Holland's review of the book, which was a mean thing,

[1] Mss., prepared by Mr. Weik, July 4th, 1910.

squelched things completely. Black lost his money and his time through the muss.

You refer me to Lamon, page 396, and ask if the paragraph is true or false. It is in all things substantially correct. In speaking of Douglas and the Charleston convention, and the divided state of the Democracy in 1859-60, Lincoln often said to me, and to others in my presence, *substantially* this: "The end is not yet, but another explosion must come in the near future. Douglas is a great man in his way and has quite unlimited power over the great mass of his party, especially in the North. If he goes to the Charleston convention, which he will do, he, in a spirit of revenge, will split the convention wide open and give it the devil; and right here is our future success, or rather the glad hope of it." By the way, Lincoln prayed for this state of affairs: he saw in it opportunity and wisely played his line. He studied the trend of political affairs, drew conclusions as to general results, and calmly bided his time. Lincoln was the great American *thinker* and the unknown — at least to the mass of men. He felt that Douglas was *the* strong man and that he must be put out of the way, politically. He did not fear any man in the South. He was after Douglas, always scheming and planning.

May, 1890: You regret, as well as myself, that I sold my Mss. to Lamon. The reason why I did so was that I was then, in 1870-72, a poor devil and had to sell to live. From 1853 to 1865 I spent all my time and money for the "nigger," or rather for Liberty and the Union — lost my practice, went to farming, and went under in the crash of 1871-3, and that, too, from no speculations — vices, etc. Today I have to work for tomorrow's bread, and yet I am a happy and contented man. I own a little farm of 65 acres and raise fruits for a living. Now you have the reasons for my acts.

In reference to Lamon's book I can say truthfully that Chauncy F. Black, son of J. S. Black, wrote quite every word of it. I infer this much from Black himself. He used to write to me about it. The publishers struck out of it a whole chapter, or nearly so. The chapter, as I understand it, was on Buchanan's Administration, or rather the last year of it. I think that act, among others, created the split. I have for years been written to by various persons to know why Lamon was so much prejudiced against Lincoln. The bitterness, if any, was not in Lamon so much as

in Black, though I am convinced that Lamon was no solid, firm friend of Lincoln, especially during Lincoln's Administration, or the latter end of it.

Meanwhile he had received and read, with great delight, the chapter on the Lincoln-Douglas debates which Horace White wrote for the forthcoming edition of the biography. With a sure stroke he put his pen upon the excellent qualities of that essay, which is by far the best account ever written of that great campaign. What he liked best was its simple, unadorned style:

Friend, it is a fine piece and let me thank you a thousand times for it. I am glad that you followed the late historical methods. I like your treatment of Douglas. The fact is I once despised the man for his want of morals, but I have forgotten all this and only remember his good points, his energy and his genius. Your piece will be the best chapter in the life of Lincoln. I am glad that it is just what it is: it is exhaustive of the subject. You might have hammered it out and made it thinner and weaker, but no poetry, no adjectives, no superlatives would have done it any good. In your own opinion you did not reach your ideal, but that is natural. Our ideals are just an inch beyond our reach.

You hit Arnold a good lick: he was a credulous man without any critical ability at all; his book contains many errors, but it did not become me to say one word against Arnold's book. I helped him a good deal in his *Life of Lincoln*. Mr. Arnold is correct, however, when he states that Lincoln said, "I am fighting for bigger game." Lincoln made use of the expression.[1] He was a shrewd, sagacious, cunning, far-seeing man, and he purposely politically killed Douglas. I can see Lincoln now setting his stakes for that end.

Yes, Lamon's book was a great failure. The materials of it richly deserve a better fate. I hope you will have a good time on your recreation spree. I wish I could trip it with you. White, are you getting rich? I am as poor as Job's turkey.

October, 1890: My ears are always open to my friends,

[1] Mr. Herndon was not alone in his criticism of Mr. Arnold's *Life of Lincoln*, which, though an admirable book, slurred over the facts about Lincoln's youth. — *Life of Lincoln*, by J. T. Morse, p. 9 (1896). But Mr. Arnold was one of the few biographers of Lincoln who was just to Mr. Douglas, perhaps because they were old friends.

and I wish all men would write to me as candidly as you have done. . . . I will write to General Wilson and request him to burn my Lincoln letters to him. I have never opened to any person, except yourself and General Wilson, the story of Lincoln's history. My motives were good in doing as I did. I wished to throw light on the mysterious phases of his wonderful life. *I loved Lincoln*, and I thought the reading world wished all the lights I had. Hence the facts told in the biography and in private letters. I may have erred in the head, but my heart was right. I can tell from the ring of your words that friendship dictated every word of your advice, and I thank you. Give my highest regards to your wife and children.

November, 1890: I have received a letter from General Wilson in which he says: "I recognize the wisdom of your wishes and will destroy your letters." . . . In my last letter I unintentionally touched a tender chord in your bosom. Excuse me. I have passed through the same and know what the loss of a good wife is. Friend, we can bring life into the world, but we cannot keep it here: it will vanish, we know not where, and this thing we call immortality, is it not a shadow of our egotism thrown into the future? It gratifies this little man to think that Nature takes providential care of him and destroys all else for the sake of him.

February, 1891: I am still diligently gathering well-authenticated facts about Lincoln. Many I reject, because they are not in harmony with the fundamental elements of his nature, and because they come to me in unauthentic shapes. I expect to continue gathering facts about Lincoln as long as I live, and when I go hence the reading world shall have my Mss. unchanged, unaltered, just as I took them down. I think that they will be of value to mankind sometime. I have been at this business since 1865. Every day I think of some fact, and it suggests other facts. The human mind is a curious thing. I have been sick all winter.

One month later, on March 14, 1891, Mr. Herndon died at his humble home on his farm five miles from Springfield, his last words being: "I have received my summons; I am an overripe sheaf; but I will take the weaker one with me" — referring to his son, who died the same day. So passed an ardent, impetuous man of great native ability, radical of mind but lovable of soul; a strong man whose zeal often exceeded his wisdom, but whose charity was unfailing; a man of noble

integrity as a citizen, a lawyer, and a friend; unwilling to compromise truth, yet eager to give every man his due. He has been cruelly misjudged, if not foully belied, but all this may be forgotten, for he has passed

"To where, beyond these voices, there is peace."

CHAPTER X

Herndon's Lincoln

Lincoln literature is enormous. To attain the rank of an expert in this field means years of toil, but one who is not an expert may hazard the opinion that, in spite of all that has been written, we yet lack a thoroughly satisfactory book about the life and work and character of Lincoln.[1] Some few have had the necessary knowledge and sympathy, but their literary power was inadequate. Others have written well, but they have failed of understanding. Many of the books about Lincoln are worthless, some are valuable, a few are notable, but an adequate record and estimate of that remarkable man is among the things awaited. So far no writer of the first order has attempted to recite that strange yet simple story. No one has done for Lincoln what Morley did for Gladstone, either because we have so few literary statesmen, or because the time has not arrived.

In the meantime the volume of facts, impressions, and reminiscences of Lincoln increases, and through an assembling of items in a variety of ways we are coming to a composite conception of the man that is at once vivid and satisfying. That so many have written of him is a tribute to his hold upon the affections of men, for it has not fallen to his lot to become

[1] Perhaps the mass of Lincoln literature would number 5,000 items, which of course includes many pamphlets — a veritable paradise for collectors. — *Lincoln in 1854*, by Horace White, pp. 22-3 (1908). What is here said is not intended to belittle any biographer or student of Lincoln, but surely no one will claim that the final biography of him has been written. Probably the best brief biographies are those by Hapgood, Morse, and Binns, in the order named. It is matter for regret that Henry Watterson did not finish his biography of Lincoln, which no doubt would have been a memorable volume. He had gone abroad to write it, but was called home by the exigences of the campaign of 1896.

a mere statue in the hall of memory, but to remain warmly human, almost as if he had lived on through the years; and happily no artist has ironed all the human wrinkles out of his rugged, homely face. But we need a really great biography of Lincoln, whose pages, while portraying the development of his life, shall be invested with the atmosphere of his personality; and for such a work the canvass, the colors, and the cleared light of time are ready for the touch of a master hand.

I

As to the Herndon biography, it is worth while to study its spirit, purpose, and methods, if for no other reason, to learn his conception of a man whom he had studied for forty years.[1] Had he written it in 1866, as he had planned to do, perhaps it would have had more fire in it, more of the glow and color of that strange personality which swayed him, at times, like a religious experience. Misfortune, however, prevented him, and much of his materials went into other books. Despite this loss, he gained much by a longer perspective and a calmer vision, though he never passed from under that "long-enduring spell," no matter how hard he tried to free himself from it, as he thought he must do, in behalf of a more unbiased judgment. Many of the manuscript notes from which the biography was written are before me, and they show how fresh the great memory was upon him, how carefully he sought to describe it, how eager he was to be just, how patiently he

[1] Of the biographies published during his lifetime, Mr. Herndon regarded that by Lamon as, on the whole, the truest, though he was aware of its grave defects (Ms. "Statement: a Memorandum, Jan., 1886"). Holland was too romantic, Arnold too credulous, while Nicolay and Hay glossed over many things in the early life of Lincoln. He followed the Nicolay-Hay series in the *Century*, and his verdict was that "the boys," as he called them — for such they were to him — had done good work, though some of their theories amused him (Ms. letters to Mr. Weik, Jan., 1887). He was a generous critic, however, knowing how hard it was to explain Lincoln; that is, when any student was sincerely trying to know the truth. But for some others he had no mercy, and asked none.

labored to be accurate. When the first edition appeared in 1889, the *Atlantic Monthly* said in an excellent review:

> We think we are not mistaken in looking upon Herndon's *Lincoln* as a most timely and valuable contribution to a just understanding of that great man, even though much of it in a preliminary form appears to have found place originally in Lamon's *Life*. Considered only as a *memoire pour sevoir*, it is of unmistakable service. It bears the marks of patient and painstaking labor in gathering all the facts regarding Lincoln's origin and early years; and when the reader considers that Mr. Herndon was Lincoln's law partner for twenty years; that he made his acquaintance as far back as 1837; that he lived amongst Lincoln's early companions, and, so to speak, spoke the Illinois language, it is easy to see how important may be his testimony. In addition, the open-minded reader can scarcely read this artless book without feeling a growing confidence in Mr. Herndon's honesty and accuracy. The very offenses against good taste show him to be a good witness, and it has many charms for cultivated readers through the very homeliness of its narrative. To any one who wishes to know the truth about Lincoln, at whatever cost to illusions, this book is invaluable and suggestive.

No one knew better than Mr. Herndon that he was not the man to write the final biography of Lincoln. He lacked, as he frankly confessed, the necessary literary skill for such an undertaking, caring "less for the composition than for the solid substance;" but he recognized the obligation upon him to furnish the raw material from which some future artist might evoke a work of beauty. His idea was that the real Lincoln should be portrayed just as he was in life, struggle, and growth, without idealization or degradation, full length, no fact omitted, no angle smoothed away. If in his own record he stood so straight that he leaned a little backward, it was characteristic of a man to whom Lincoln was too great, too honest, and too noble for mere eulogy, and who was certain that "the more truth we know about him the more he will be honored and loved." Surely this was a truer tribute than the portrayal of an ideally impossible or impossibly ideal Lin-

coln would have been, though certain lady-like persons were sorely grieved.

As it is, no one need prepare a brief in vindication of Mr. Herndon and his work — nor is this study such a defense, for his frailties have been recorded here alongside his virtues, just as he would have them stand. Every year Time, greatest of all critics, justifies him by displacing the idol and setting up the man Lincoln, and the Lincoln whom the world knows and loves to-day is the Lincoln whom Herndon knew and loved. If his portrait startled at first, it was not for long, as the discerning soon saw that Lincoln was the greater for the peccadilloes his friend had pointed out. Herndon kept ever in mind the words of Lincoln in 1858, when, after trying to read the *Life of Edmund Burke*, he threw it aside and said:

> No, I've read enough of it. It's like all the others. Biographies as generally written are not only misleading, but false. The author of this life of Burke makes a wonderful hero out of his subject. He magnifies his perfections — if he had any — and suppresses his imperfections. He is so faithful in his zeal and so lavish in praise of his every act that one is almost driven to believe that Burke never made a mistake or a failure in his life. Billy, I've wondered why book publishers and merchants don't have blank biographies on their shelves, always ready for an emergency; so that, if a man happens to die, his heirs or his friends, if they wish to perpetuate his memory, can purchase one already written, but with blanks. These blanks they can at their pleasure fill up with rosy sentences full of high-sounding praise. In most instances they commemorate a lie, and cheat posterity out of the truth. History is not history unless it is the truth.

Like all human beings Herndon made errors, both of fact and of taste, but he remembered the words of Lincoln and tried to follow them literally. Time did not dim the great memory, but it made him analytical, and in his effort to explain Lincoln it was inevitable that he should form certain theories, and as inevitable that he should cling to them somewhat tenaciously. But even his theories are interesting and valuable, as showing what qualities in Lincoln most impressed him, and what qual-

ities, if any, he failed to read aright. Very wisely he confined himself to the personal life of Lincoln, though, if we may judge from his letters to Senator Trumbull,[1] he at one time intended to treat of his official life as well. But for that task he was not fitted, and happily that field had been repeatedly covered before his long-delayed volumes appeared. Others may describe the personal, social, domestic, and office life of Lincoln with more artistic touch, but as an analysis of the intellectual traits and moral character of his partner the work of Herndon can never be superseded.

Despite its obvious crudities, its lack of proportion, and its emphasis upon matters which might have been given less space, the Herndon biography has undeniable charms which even the most obdurate critic must admire. For one thing, the modesty of the author must impress the reader from the first line to the last. Indeed, it is almost a defect of the book that Mr. Herndon kept himself too much in the background, leaving out many charming details of his fellowship with Lincoln for fear of seeming to exploit himself.[2] Others — Whitney, for instance — who were far less intimate with Lincoln, paraded their association with him in a manner to disgust Herndon, who did not wish to ride into fame on the coat-tail of his partner.[3] There was, besides, a special reason for hiding himself in this book, since Lamon, to his amazement, had shown him in

[1] Ms. letters to Senator Trumbull, Jan. 11, 1866, Aug. 16, 1866. The questions he asked Senator Trumbull show that he did not know the life of Lincoln in the White House with sufficient detail to make a record of it.

[2] For example: when Lincoln sued the Illinois Central Railroad for a fee of $5,000 he telegraphed to Herndon to remain in the office until his train arrived that night. At last he came in with the money and counted out Herndon's half; but when Herndon started to take it Lincoln stopped him, and said: "Hold on, Billy; how often have you stretched yourself on that sofa and discoursed of how the corporations are strangling the life out of this nation? This is corporation money!" Notwithstanding the peril of the country, Herndon took the money.

[3] He even hesitated to lecture on Lincoln, lest it be thought that he was trading upon the name of his partner; and for the same reason it almost broke his heart to have to sell copies of his Lincoln records.

the light of a teacher and leader of Lincoln, intimating, repeatedly, that he had by persistence and strategy converted his partner to anti-slavery faith and feeling. Hence the frequent protests of Herndon that he was not conscious of ever having influenced Lincoln in the slightest degree; which was an exaggeration, for two such strong men could not work together for so many years and not be influenced by such fellowship and contact. But the real reason for his modesty was of a piece with his life of self-effacement in behalf of his partner and friend, whose greatness he divined from the first and whose interest and fame he sought to serve.

Even the casual reader must note the absence of mawkish sentiment in the Herndon record, in contrast with the half-pitying tone of others who dwell upon the early environment of Lincoln. Herndon knew that primitive environment, it had enwrapped his own life, and therefore he did not sentimentalize about it. If the life of the pioneer had its hardships and hazard, it had also its compensations. When Nicolay and Hay, in trying to explain the melancholy of Lincoln, said that the pioneers were a lonely, unsocial folk who never smiled, Herndon wished that they might have attended some of the corn-huskings, log-rollings, hoe-down dances, musters, elections, and camp-meetings of the olden times.[1] They would have seen, instead, a jovial, smiling, rollicking people, quite unlike the lonely, shadow-haunted pioneers of imagination. Nor did Herndon indulge in saccharine slaverings over the early privations of Lincoln, as though that strong, self-reliant youth, whose lot was not more forlorn than that of many another lad of his day, were an object of pity. No doubt the temperamental melancholy of Lincoln evoked sympathy, as his character invited confidence, but of all men he was the last to desire the sympathy of his fellows. Of this matter, as of some others to be noted, Mr. Herndon wrote with more point in his manuscript notes than in his printed record. Thus:

> Men who do not know Lincoln and never did, have paraded his hardships and struggles in his early days in glowing, or

[1] Ms. letter to J. W. Weik, Jan., 1887.

> sad, words. Such a description of the man is not exactly true. He never saw a day that he did not have many friends who vied with each other for the pleasure of assisting him financially, and in all ways. Lincoln deserved all this confidence and respect: he was all honor and integrity, spoke the whole truth and acted it. Like all boys in the great West and elsewhere, he had to study in order to learn. Life was comparatively easy in his case, as compared with the struggles of other ambitious young men. Lincoln was the favorite of everybody, man, woman and child, where he lived and was known, and he richly deserved it. But generally he rejected all help, his motto being that those who receive favors owe a debt of gratitude, and are to that extent slaves.[1]

Lincoln, as Herndon knew him, was not only self-reliant, but self-dependent to a degree that amazed and baffled his friends. Considerate of others, ready to listen to advice, he was yet sufficient unto himself, having his resources within his own nature. Frank and genial up to a certain point, he was one of the most reticent of men, keeping his own counsel, so that Leonard Swett said, with some impatience, "You cannot tell what Lincoln is going to do, until he does it." Hence the difficulty of describing him, and the reason for so many failures to do so. Even Herndon, whose intuition was almost feminine in its divination, was often puzzled. Naturally he was impatient with those glib writers who imagined that, because the ideas of Lincoln and his mode of expressing them were so simple, his character and mental processes were easy of analysis. Such, however, was not the fact, and it emphasizes the utter worthlessness of much that has been written about him. If Herndon often fails to reach the lonely inner life of his partner, hidden within so many folds of reserve, he at least leaves us with a sense of wonder. Speaking of the work of Nicolay and Hay, in which he found much to commend, he said:

> They tell a good truth when they state that "Lincoln received everybody's confidence and rarely gave his own in return." That is emphatically Lincoln. Again, the "boys"

[1] Ms. essay written for C. O. Poole, Jan., 1886.

> — I use the word "boys" in a respectful sense — state another fact, namely, that Mr. Lincoln had great individuality which he never sank in the mob. His individualism stood out from the mass of men like a lone cliff over the plain below. Again they say that Lincoln had great dignity, and that is the truth. He was a very plain man and, to a certain point, of easy approach — quite democratic and social — but beyond a certain ring of self-respect, of reserve, which surrounded and guarded his person, no man ever dared to go without a silent but powerful rebuff. He would be cheerful and chatty, social and communicative, tell his stories and laugh, and yet you could see, if you had any perception, that Lincoln's soul was not present: it was in another sphere. He was with you and he was not with you; familiar with you and yet kept you at a distance. He was an abstracted man, and few knew him. . . . This explains why Holland never found out anything while here gathering facts; and it further explains why there was such a disagreement among the citizens of Springfield as to the nature and characteristics of Lincoln.[1] Few knew the man, and the many were ignorant; hence the confusion. Lincoln was a reticent, secretive, incommunicable man. I have seen and felt this in him a thousand times. He lived a pure and lofty life — *this I know* — and in his practical life he was spiritual.[2]

None the less Herndon knew Lincoln as no one else ever knew him, and he has portrayed him as far as one man can ever reveal another. He had seen him grow in the midst of the years, from an awkward, impetuous youth to a man of intellectual nobility and spiritual refinement — tested by trial, softened by sorrow, hardened by difficulty, baffled by defeat, sobered by victory. He knew the strength of the man and his limitations, the quality of his intellect, the integrity of his conscience, the kindness of his heart; the cast of his thought, and his sombre outlook upon life; his humor and his pathos, his prudence and his practical sagacity. He had known and felt these qualities when they were young together, and he never ceased to admire them. Yet there was that in Lincoln which always eluded

[1] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. G. Holland, pp. 240-42 (1866).

[2] Ms. letter to Jesse W. Weik, Feb., 1887.

him, an indefinable and uncapturable something which cast over him, as it casts over us, a mysterious and haunting spell.

II

One would rather leave out of account the debated questions involved in the Herndon record. Yet so much ado has been made over them, and so much more injustice has been done to Herndon than he ever did to the memory of his partner, that some notice must be taken of them, unpleasant as such a task may be. There are two such questions, but it must be said that neither of them is the real basis of the absurd prejudice against Mr. Herndon, which ought long ago to have vanished. The real reason for the feeling against him was his refusal to permit Lincoln to be "canonized as a Calvinistic saint;" and that he was right in this is not open to debate. That he made one unhappy blunder of taste, and of fact, all now admit; but surely, after the foregoing pages, all must see that it was an error of the head and not of the heart. No one can any longer doubt that it was his zeal for the truth at any cost that misled him, and a virtue so rare in a biographer should condone some offenses.

As is well known, the head and front of his offending had to do with the ancestry of Lincoln, so long veiled in obscurity. Without trying to excuse Mr. Herndon for any blunder he may have made, it is but just to say that it was not his error at all. The confusion of facts was due to a mistake of Lincoln himself, who remained all his life ignorant of his own pedigree, thinking that he was born out of wedlock and of an ancestry of which he had no reason to be proud. Hence the silence and sadness which enshrouded him when the subject was mentioned, and a significant reserve in speaking of his origin. Only once did he speak of it to Mr. Herndon:

> It was about 1850, when he and I were driving in his one-horse buggy to the court in Menard County, Illinois. The suit we were going to try was one in which we were likely, either directly or collaterally, to touch upon the subject of heredity traits. During the ride he spoke, for the first time in my hearing, of his mother, dwelling on her characteristics,

> and mentioning or enumerating what qualities he inherited from her. He said, among other things, that she was the daughter of Lucy Hanks and a well-bred but obscure Virginia farmer or planter; and he argued that from this last source came his power of analysis, his logic, his mental activity, his ambition, and all the qualities that distinguished him from the other members and descendants of the Hanks family.[1]

Both men held the theory — still an article of faith to many — that the divine fire of genius is kindled in the flame of unlawful love. Of course Lincoln did not apply the theory to himself, since he was not vain enough to imagine that he was a genius; but Herndon applied it to him, and found in it a clew to the mysterious man by his side. Another mistake by Lincoln in 1860 added to the confusion. To J. L. Scripps, who came to Springfield to get from him the facts for a sketch of his life, he said that his father and mother were married in Hardin County, Kentucky.[2] Scripps afterwards said, "He communicated some facts to me concerning his ancestry, which he did not wish to have published then, and which I have never alluded to before."[3] After a diligent search at Elizabethtown, the county-seat of Hardin County, no record of the marriage was found; and no one need be told that such a discrepancy would occasion all sorts of campaign gossip, especially at a time when the swarm of lies was blacker than usual. When, in 1865, Mr. Herndon went to look into the matter for himself he found no record, and was assured that there had been no marriage at all: so he concluded that Lincoln, like Alexander Hamilton, had been born out of wedlock. Nor is it easy to see,

[1] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 3. No doubt his error was due to the fact that his mother, when a little girl, was sent to live with her uncle and aunt, Thomas and Betsy Sparrow. As she did not remember her own parents, it is probable that gossip found in this fact a hook upon which to hang its tale. The fantastic Dennis Hanks, who lived in the same home, added his part to the fiction; but his yarns would never bear cross-examination.

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by J. L. Scripps, *New York Tribune Tracts*, No. 6, p. 1 (1860).

[3] *Abraham Lincoln*, by Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 2 (1892).

with such a state of facts before him, how he was so much at fault, though, upon the advice of Horace White, he removed all hint of it from the second edition of his biography. That is the sum of the matter so far as Mr. Herndon had anything to do with it.

Shortly after Herndon's death the error was cleared by the discovery that Lincoln was mistaken, and that his parents were married in Washington County, where the record is still intact.[1] But Lincoln himself died without knowing that he was born not only in honest and pure wedlock, but of an ancestry of which he could have no need to be ashamed. Historically, it would not matter who were his parents, any more than it matters that he whom the late English king rejoiced to call his progenitor was a bastard; for Lincoln is honored for what he was and for what he did, and it would be so in spite of any lack of records as to his origin. But all good men and women rejoice that no shadow rests upon the grave of the hapless, sad-hearted Nancy Hanks, who gave us Lincoln and never knew how great a gift he was to his country and his race.

Of the second point in dispute little need be said, as the record of Mr. Herndon has not been shaken, though in his remarkable description of the scene he might have left something to the imagination. That the engagement of Lincoln and Mary Todd was abruptly broken off on "the fatal 1st of January," 1841, not without chagrin and shame on both sides, no one denies. Every known fact confirms it; every boot-heel of circumstantial evidence stamps it as true. There are those who deny, however, that it occurred in the manner described, and after the supposed error of Herndon in the matter of ancestry an attempt has been made to convict him of error, if not of falsehood, here.[2] But the effort is in vain, and the facts

[1] Credit for this vindication of the good name of Nancy Hanks is due to Mrs. Hobart Vawter, Mrs. Caroline Hitchcock, and Mr. Henry Watterson. — *Nancy Hanks*, by Caroline Hitchcock (1900).

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by Ida M. Tarbell, Vol. I, pp. 174-78 (1900). It is strange that Miss Tarbell should try to brand Mr. Herndon as a liar and a forger, and that, too, upon testimony so flimsy that it hardly deserves notice. Those whom she brings forward to disprove the inci-

must stand as he stated them. Lincoln, torn by we know not what morbid memories and misgivings, failed to appear on the wedding night, and for the second time in his life walked on the verge of insanity. Nor is this incident more strange than some others in a life which had in it more of mystery than that of any other man of recent times.

While Herndon was correct as to his facts, his inference from them was nothing short of absurd. That the proud, high-spirited Mary Todd held fast to so forlorn a lover for revenge, is hardly less believable than the legend that she foresaw his future distinction. Perhaps, though, Herndon was not far from right when he argued that if Lincoln had married Ann Rutledge, or some other gentle country girl, he would not now be known to fame. While not lazy, he was disposed to loaf, and needed the prodding of his gifted and aspiring wife. For the rest, it is enough to say that while marriage between two so utterly unlike was rendered exceptionally difficult, it certainly was not one from which love was absent. As with Thomas and Jane Carlyle, they probably understood each other far better than any one else understood either of them, and neither was free from fault. If Lincoln suffered much from her outbursts of temper, over which she seemed to have no control, Herndon thought that she had more to endure from a man so abstracted, so oblivious of social arts, and so unskilled in weaving "those little links which make up the chain of woman's happiness." It is a severe test of a man to have his private life laid bare, and there is always the question of taste in making such disclosures. But since it has been done, it is but just to record that Lincoln did not fail of the patience and tenderness required by the conditions of his home.

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dent were none of them present. Over against them is the plain statement of Mrs. Ninian Edwards, the sister of the bride, in whose home the wedding was to be celebrated: "Lincoln and Mary were engaged; everything was ready and prepared for the marriage, even to the supper. Lincoln failed to meet his engagement. Cause, insanity!" — *Life of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, p. 240 (1872). Nor did Mr. Herndon invent this statement, as Miss Tarbell intimates. Whatever may have been his failings, he was not a liar.

Of course, the whole topic should have been veiled in that privacy which ought always to be accorded to such relations; but Lincoln, like Carlyle, was not shown such respect. Though Herndon, as he assures us, was on the side of the wife, he records the facts with merciless fidelity, perhaps because so much was said about her on this score during her lifetime. She was never popular as "the first lady of the land,"[1] but that is no reason why her unfortunate traits should be emphasized to the neglect of others which were not only more numerous, but lovely and winning. Pitiful was her grief after the last great tragedy, which so shattered her mind that she was never herself again. Yet to the end she was pursued by a prying press in a manner so unmanly, so unchivalric, that one can find no words severe enough for rebuke.[2]

III

Mention has been made of the descriptive powers of Mr. Herndon, and they certainly deserve mention, for they are remarkable alike for swiftness of stroke and vividness of detail. Examples are many, such as the picture of the wedding scene in 1841, of the murder trials, of Lincoln the story-teller, of the speech before the Bloomington convention in 1856, of Lincoln's mannerisms in oratory at the beginning of the great debates; and others of like kind. But surely his masterpiece is his sketch of Lincoln as a man, his figure, features, movements, manners, and personal traits, which appeared first in a lecture

[1] *Recollections of a Busy Life*, by Horace Greeley, p. 408 (1869).

[2] *Life of Lincoln*, by I. N. Arnold, pp. 433-40 (1884). In rebuke of a gossiping press Mr. Arnold recalls the words of the Earl of Oxford, in Sir Walter Scott's *Anne of Geierstein*, when the Duke of Burgundy was jesting about Margaret of Anjou: "Whatever may have been the defects of my mistress, she is in distress, and almost in desolation." The death of her son Thomas in 1871 deepened the anguish of this beshadowed woman. Rather tardily, through the influence of Sumner, Congress gave her a pension, which ought to have been larger than it was, as Greeley urged. She died at the home of her sister, Mrs. Ninian Edwards, in Springfield, Ill., July 16, 1882. So dark had been her life since the great tragedy that death seemed like dawn.

in 1866, and later in the final chapter of the biography. Slightly abbreviated it is as follows:

> Mr. Lincoln was six feet four inches high, and when he left the city of his home for Washington was fifty-one years old, having good health and no gray hairs, or but few, on his head. He was thin, wiry, sinewy, raw-boned; thin through the breast to the back, and narrow across the shoulders; standing he leaned forward — was what may be called stoop-shouldered, inclining to the consumptive by build. His usual weight was one hundred and eighty pounds. . . . His structure was loose and leathery; his body shrunk and shriveled; he had dark skin, dark hair, and looked woe-struck. The whole man, body and mind worked slowly, as if it needed oiling. Physically he was a very powerful man, lifting with ease four hundred, and in one case six hundred, pounds. Hence there was very little bodily or mental wear and tear in him.
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> When he walked he moved cautiously but firmly; his long arms and giant hands swung down by his side. He walked with even tread, the inner sides of his feet being parallel. He put the whole foot down flat on the ground at once, not landing on the heel. Hence he had no spring in his walk. His walk was undulatory — catching and pocketing tire, weariness, and pain, all up and down his person, and thus preventing them from locating. The first impression of a man who did not observe closely was that his walk implied shrewdness and cunning — that he was a tricky man; but, in reality it was the walk of caution and firmness. In sitting down on a common chair he was no taller than ordinary men. His legs and arms were abnormally, unnaturally long, and in undue proportion to the rest of his body. It was only when he stood up that he loomed above other men.
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> Mr. Lincoln's head was long, and tall from the base of the brain and from the eyebrows. His head ran backwards, his forehead rising as it ran back at a low angle, like Clay's, and unlike Webster's, which was almost perpendicular. The size of his hat measured at the hatter's block was seven and one-eighth, his head being, from ear to ear, six and one half inches. Thus measured it was not below the medium size. His forehead was narrow but high; his hair was dark, almost black, and lay floating where his fingers or the wind left it, piled up at random. His cheeks were high, sharp, and prominent; his nose was large, long, blunt, and a

> little awry towards the right eye; his chin was sharp and upcurved; his eyebrows cropped out like a huge rock on the brow of a hill; his long, sallow face was wrinkled and dry, with a hair here and there in the surface; his cheeks were leathery; his ears were large, and ran out almost at right angles to his head, caused partly by heavy hats and partly by nature; his lower lip was thick, hanging and undercurved, while his chin reached for the lip upcurved; his neck was neat and trim, his head being well balanced on it; there was a large mole on his cheek, and Adam's apple on his throat. Thus stood, walked, acted, and looked Abraham Lincoln.

It is indeed Lincoln; and for photographic realism no one may ever hope to surpass this picture. It is the portrait of a giant, in body and mind, slow and massive of movement, strong, gentle, and sad. One can almost feel the gaze from the small, gray, deep-set eyes, at once so calm, so inscrutable, and so benign, inviting trust and shaming wrong. Strange lights and shadows played over that rugged, mobile face, often blending so quickly that mirth seemed to melt into sadness, and sadness gleam into mirth, as if they were akin. It is a map of his life, and its lines range from Francis of Assisi to Grant, from Hamlet to Falstaff, from Rabelais to Isaiah, so that whoso studies it sees, however dimly, something of his own soul, and catches, however faint and far, a glimpse of what it is to be a man. If his later portraits, showing the beard worn at the request of a little girl, obscure some of the deep lines, they make the eyes more impressive, revealing at once the gentleness of true gianthood and the wisdom of patience and pity. Of all the faces that look out upon us from the past, none is more arresting, none more appealing, none more eloquent of simple human majesty.

Herndon makes note of the humor of Lincoln, but he does not emphasize it, perhaps because others have exaggerated it out of all proportion to the rest of his powers. He had scant patience with those who made him appear in the guise of a mere fabulist, a purveyor of jokes, forgetting the dignity of the man, and failing to see that his stories, especially in his latter years, were the wrappings of his thoughts, like the fan-

tastic jewel cases which Socrates saw in the stores of Athens. If, as one has well said, Lincoln combined within himself the strangely diverse rôles of ruler and court jester, and was equally eminent in both characters, the jester always obeyed the ruler. His humor, as Herndon saw it, was the pledge of his sanity indeed, but more often it was the frolic of his intellect, a stroke of laughter to clear and sweeten the air.

> In the role of a story-teller I am prone to regard Mr. Lincoln as without an equal. . . . His power of mimicry and his manner of recital were in many respects unique, if not remarkable. His countenance and all his features seemed to take part in the performance. As he neared the pith or point of the joke every vestige of seriousness disappeared from his face. His little grey eyes sparkled; a smile seemed to gather up, curtain like, the corners of his mouth; his frame quivered with suppressed excitement; and when the point — or "nub" of the story, as he called it — came, no one's laugh was heartier than his. . . . Every recital was followed by a storm of laughter. After this had died down, some unfortunate creature, through whose thick skull the point had just penetrated, would break out in a guffaw, starting another wave of laughter. . . . I have seen Judge Treat, who was the very impersonation of gravity itself, sit up till the last and laugh until, as he often expressed it, "he almost shook his ribs loose." The next day he would ascend the bench and listen to Lincoln in a murder trial, with all the seeming severity of an English judge in wig and gown.

What impressed Herndon more than all else was the intellect of Lincoln — a tireless intellect always toiling, taking nothing for granted, and building his thought-world from the ground up, as if no one had ever thought before him. It was, moreover, an ultra-conservative intellect, which saw life for less than it is, yet willing to face the drab and haggard reality as he saw it. With sure insight Herndon found in the very cast of his mind one cause of the sadness of the man. Lincoln was by nature and habit mercilessly, almost morbidly, analytical, and whoso tries life by such tests is doomed to walk a dim and shadowy path. He thought that life is ruled by logic, whereas logic cannot be made to compass more than a

tiny segment of it. Hence the superstition of Lincoln, for when a man follows logic to its limit he must either make the venture of faith or leave the fag ends of his thought to split and ravel into the occult. Mr. Herndon wrote much in analysis of the mind of his partner, and his manuscript notes are even more suggestive, at times, than his final record. We read:

> Lincoln stands high up among the mountain men of the world. He thought too much and did too much for America to be crammed into an epigram, or shot off with a single rocket. He was too close to the touch of the Divine everywhere, too near the suggestions and whispering of nature, for such quick work done with a flash. It requires close, severe analysis to understand the man who was a riddle and a puzzle to his neighbors among whom he lived. You wish to know the elements of Lincoln's greatness and the secrets of his power. Having been acquainted with him for more than thirty years — twenty years of that time intimately — I have formed settled opinions founded upon my own observations.
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> Lincoln's power rested on the qualities of his nature, which were as follows: First, he had great reason, lucid and strong; he lived in his thought and thought in his life: a close, cautious, persistent, profound, terrible *thinker*. Politics was his life, newspapers his food, ambition his motive power. He was never a general reader, but always a thinker: embodied reflection itself; an abstracted man — self-reliant, self-helpful, never once doubting his power to do anything any one else could do. He thought — at least he so acted — that there was no limitation to the endurance of his mental and vital forces. Long, severe, exhaustive study of the subjects which he loved, without stimulative food or drinks — he ate and drank mechanically, apparently — wrought evils in his intellectual and physical system. There was a kind of mental exhaustion, a nervous morbidity and irritability. Hence, I think, came a little of his melancholy and superstition.
>
> Secondly, Lincoln had a living, active, breathing conscience that rooted itself deep down in his very being, every fiber of which twisted around his whole nervous system. This conscience of his was a positive quality, the court of courts which gave final judgments from which there was no appeal, so far as he was concerned. He stood bolt upright

and downright on his conscience. Lincoln lived in his reason and his conscience, and these two attributes were the ruling powers of his nature, of his entire life.

It is thought by some that Lincoln was a very warm-hearted man, spontaneous and impulsive. This is not the exact truth. He was tender-hearted *when in the presence* of suffering or when it was enthusiastically or poetically described to him: he had great charity for the weaknesses of his fellows; his nature was merciful; but he had little imagination to invoke suffering through the distance, or fancy to paint it. His heart was warm enough, impulsive enough, for the broad field of his destiny. A President in office has not legally much to do with the heart, but all to do with justice as defined by law. Had Lincoln been a man of no will and all heart this Union would have gone to wreck in 1863 or before. Was he not built and organized for the occasion? Was he not the right man at the right time, in the right place? Would you have made him different? [1]

It was a favorite theory with Herndon that the consideration and charity of Lincoln resulted rather from his sense of justice than from his sympathy. Such a discussion, as President Taft has suggested, is hardly profitable; but it emphasizes the Lincoln as Herndon knew him. During the awful ordeal of war scenes of suffering were always *present*, and the heart of Lincoln was revealed, prompting him to yield abstractions but never to surrender principle. Continuing, Mr. Herndon says:

Lincoln was a sad man. Signs of melancholy were chiseled into every line of his face. Men at once saw that he was a man of sorrow, and this was a magnetic tie giving him power over men. Now the question is, What were the causes of this sadness? First, possibly, was heredity. His mother was an uneducated, but by nature an intellectual, sad, and sensitive woman. Lincoln was in some particulars a very sensitive man. Secondly, it is probable that his physical organization, which functioned slowly, feebly, added to this feeling of depression. His fatalistic philosophy, the idea that he was in the hands of an invisible, irresistible, inevitable Power may have contributed to his despondency. The death of Ann Rutledge, the sweet girl of New Salem, and his

[1] Ms. letter to C. O. Poole, Jan., 1886.

> later home life, increased it. Twice he walked the sharp and narrow line that divides sanity from insanity.[1]
>
> It is said that Lincoln was a many-sided man. I suggest that it is more accurate to say that he was a many-mooded man. His thoughts and acts were tinged and colored by his moods. Now, put all these qualities together — his great reason, his living conscience, his practical sagacity, his sadness, his fatalism, his scepticism of the creeds — and run them out into his daily life, and you have a glimpse of the man and his inner life. I felt these qualities when we were young together, and I feel them now. Because the nation felt them, it trusted him with unlimited power.[2]

But it is only a glimpse, for it leaves out of account the innate idealism of Lincoln, his mysticism, his deep unconscious poetry, and, above all, the persuasive and indefinable power of temperament. His sadness was largely due to his temperament, in which his final tragedy seemed always to be foreshadowed. In his temperament, too, lay that rare, unanalyzable quality which suffused his words and not only turned so many of them into literature, but gave them an influence they would not have had if uttered by another. To this day the smallest scrap of his writing has this distinctive touch and tone. There was logic in his speech, and humor, and human sympathy, and a clear mastery of words; but there was something deeper and more appealing. It was the quality of his temperament. In an unusual manner the inner forces of his nature played through his intellect; and when deeply stirred his whole being seemed to distill itself into his speech, so that to this day his personality clings to his words. It was a rare gift, and because what was deepest in him was akin to what is deepest in the life of man everywhere, his words, like those of Burns, have a far-echoing charm.

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[1] In his lecture on "Lincoln and Ann Rutledge," delivered in 1866, Mr. Herndon said that in his younger days, before 1835, Lincoln was an ardent, somewhat impetuous and impulsive man, having much more fire and fancy in him than afterwards, and rarely beshadowed by gloom. But the death of Ann Rutledge modified his nature, leaving him mortally wounded at heart. That sorrow subdued him to its own color, and clothed him in shadow.

[2] Ms. letter to C. O. Poole, Jan., 1886.

As a thinker he was contemplative rather than speculative, such a man as Charles Lamb delighted to meet, with whom one "could hover over the confines of truth." His philosophy of life was quite simple, almost rudimentary, and easily defined; yet so peculiar was his angle of mental vision, so personal his point of view, that he seemed to have thought it out for the first time. Though familiar enough, it was in a sense original with him, for less than almost any other man he was influenced by the labors of other minds. He dealt with life at first hand, built his own thought-world, and no one need be reminded that such a task required laborious and incessant toil. He had difficulty in expressing himself, because he was not a master of the English language, and because so few words had the exact color and shape of his ideas. Mr. Herndon has described his outlook upon life with singular skill:

> To know a man's philosophy is important. When well known, it leads to a full knowledge of his life and explains many of his acts, otherwise inexplicable. It is something that can be appealed to in case of doubt as evidence of a method of life. Lincoln, to use a Christian word, believed in predestination. To use a somewhat more classical word, he believed that fate ruled and doomed everything. He was heard to say, often and often, that what is to be will be; and no prayers of ours can change or reverse the decree: it is inevitable. Another part of his philosophy was that conditions make and rule the man, not man the conditions. In short, he believed in laws — general, universal, and eternal — that they governed both matter and mind from the beginning, if there was a beginning, to the very end, if there is to be an end. There were no miracles in his opinion outside of law.
>
> It would follow — and did follow — that he was a calm, cool, and patient man; that he had a broad charity for the weaknesses, foibles, and vices of mankind. He looked out from his noble nature upon the stern realities of life, the ludicrous and the sad, the foolish and the wise, and whispered to himself, "All this was decreed, it is inevitable, it was to be and now is." He waited upon the logic of events with more than a woman's patience, and at their blossoming time seized his grand opportunities — caught the flow of time and tided himself thereon. Come what would, weal

> or woe, victory or defeat, life or death, Lincoln was cool and calm, neither despairing nor exulting, praising nor blaming, eulogizing nor condemning. To shout or exult would be flying in the face of fate, or wooing her. So strong was this philosophy that it was a part of his being.[1]

All this is true as far as it goes; but during his later life, when the Hamlet thinker was forced to be a man of action, there was a spiritual growth in Lincoln which Herndon never fully realized. The pressure upon him of great problems and keen personal sorrows, the awful moral significance of the conflict in which he was the chief combatant, and the overwhelming sense of responsibility which never left him for an hour, contributed, with the natural deepening of soul which life brings, to produce, in a nature profoundly serious and naturally disposed to a spiritual view of life and conduct, a sense of reverent and calm acceptance of the guidance of a Supreme Power. While he never attained to Christian faith, he did come to feel that the Power, which in other years had worn the aspect of a stern if not indifferent fate, was more personal, less pitiless, and more responsive to human appeal.

To sum it up, the work of Mr. Herndon, of which this review is only a sketch, is indispensable to the student who would know his partner and friend. He was a rude workman dealing with raw materials, and there were many refinements in the nature of Lincoln to which he was almost blind, perhaps because he had little in his own makeup to give him the key. None the less, the Lincoln whom he portrayed is a very real person: a man of artless and unstudied simplicity; a lawyer with the heart of a humanitarian; a thinker who picked his way alone; a man of action led by a seer-like vision; a humorist whose heart was full of tears; not free from fault and therefore rich in charity; as unwavering in justice as he was unfailing in mercy. Time, trial, and sorrow were needed to make such a man, and Lincoln was still growing when he died. It was a far cry from Gentryville to Washington, from the gawky village fabulist and athlete to the patient and heroic man who

[1] Ms. letter to Mr. Lindman, Dec., 1886.

presided at the rebirth of a nation; from the "Chronicles of Reuben" to the Gettysburg address. But through the long years, as Herndon watched the unfolding of his life, there was a broadening of mind, a deepening of soul, a chastening of heart, revealing new refinements of nature, until he stood forth a masterpiece of intellect, sympathy, and character.

> This long, bony, sad man floated down the Sangamon River in a frail canoe in the spring of 1831. Like a piece of driftwood he lodged at last, without a history, strange, penniless, and alone. In sight of the capital of Illinois, in the fatigue of daily toil, he struggled for the necessaries of life. Thirty years later this same peculiar man left the Sangamon River, backed by friends, by power, by the patriotic prayers of millions of people, to be the ruler of the greatest nation in the world.

CHAPTER XI

The Senior Partner

I

One who follows Lincoln down the years, from a windowless log cabin to the White House, does not find it easy to write about him calmly. He was a man of such high and tender humanity, of personality so appealing and pathos so melting, that almost every study of him ends in a blur of eulogy. No higher tribute could be paid to any man, yet that was just what he did not like, and the reason why, in later years, he refused to read biography. He had no vanity, and being a man of humor he did not pose, nor did he wish any one to draw him other than he was. But men can no more help loving and praising him than they can help loving and praising surpassing nobility anywhere, and his very honesty in modesty makes him all the more winning. Of all the great rulers of men, he is to this day at once the most dearly human and the most sincerely revered.

There is a certain mystery about Lincoln, as there is about every great and simple man; a mystery too simple, it may be, to be found out. If he seemed complex it was because, in the midst of many complexities, he was, after all, so simple; an uncommon man with common principles and virtues, who grew up in the backyard of the republic and ascended to power in a time of crisis. Our pioneer era is still so much a matter of romance to us that many fail to see how naturally Lincoln grew, born as he was in the wild hunting grounds of Daniel Boone, having for the background of his life the wide melancholy of the western plain, its shadowy forests, its low hills, and its winding waters. His genius was homespun, not exotic; it does not dazzle or amaze; does not baffle or bewilder; and is

thus an example and a legacy of inspiration. Yet no one who saw him ever saw another man like him. He stood apart; he was original; he was himself, genuine, simple, sincere. The more we know about him the greater he seems to be in his totality of powers, none of which was supremely great, but all of which, united and held in poise, made him at once so universal and so unique.

As if by an instinct of destiny Lincoln forefelt his future, but he was no Richelieu meditating aside the great uses to which Providence had put him. And surely, if ever of any one, we may reverently believe that this simple, gentle, wise, far-seeing, mighty man was raised up of God, and trained for his task. Amid threatening chaos he left his law office for the the highest place, with the sure step of power, as if it were a matter of course; giving his partner permission to use the firm name, as before, without a conscious trait of poetry; yet looking to the far future with a longing that was poetry. He ruled a great nation as he had practised law, having in conspicuous degree the three qualities which Emerson said attract the reverence of mankind — disinterestedness, practical power, and moral courage. Assuredly he was one of the marvels of history, and if his later fame differed vastly from his early life, the reason must be found in the anomaly of the man.

One who looks back over the life of Lincoln, and the stormy era in which he appeared — coming out of the shadow and vanishing into the shadow — is left with a feeling of mingled wonder and awe. Yet hardly a throb of the embittered feeling, hardly a vestige of the acrimonious debates which precipitated that conflict is heard today, save in the feeble words of some belated zealot. All may now read with philosophical calm, when not with tearful reminiscence, the records of those memorable years, wondering the while whether some wiser method might not have been found to abolish slavery — nor forgetting the dark problem in the menacing array of racial forces even now before us. Vain are all earthly counsels to determine the fate of nations in such times of crises. One who cannot see in all this the hand of an overruling Power, guid-

ing the course of human affairs, must believe that our human life is the sport of chance, or what Tacitus called it, a Divine jest at our frailty.

II

No figure on that stage was more pitiful than that of James Buchanan, whose fame would be whiter had he not sat in the White House.[1] Old and infirm, alike ambitious and timid, he held the reins of an angry nation with a nerveless hand. That, during those mournful months, he often said that he was the last President of the United States, is almost certainly true. That he argued that the government had no right to defend its own life, is a matter of record.[2] State after State seceded and made ready for war, seizing the arms, arsenals, and forts of the nation, and not a hand was put forth to hinder. The navy, as if by plan, was scattered to the four winds of the earth. Never a leader of men, the decrepit diplomat sat as if smitten by the palsy, while the nation went to pieces before his eyes. Admirable as an adviser when prudence and caution were the virtues in request, and when there was some one to lead, he was not the man for that wild and fateful hour. Dying in 1868, he had long outlived whatever influence he may once have enjoyed, and is remembered as a man who met a great opportunity and was not equal to it.

Well might Lincoln, who sat at home powerless to do anything, be abstracted and absent-minded, with a cloud of grief in his eyes; well might he say, "I shall never be glad any more." But, if sad, he was calm and firm during that trying ordeal, willing to conciliate but refusing to compromise, while the shadow gathered and the plot thickened. What a pity that the people of the South — and the North, too, for that matter — did not know Lincoln as he knew them, and as all now know him. But the clouds were too dark for his kindly face to be seen, when, on that rainy February morning he said

[1] *Twenty Years of Congress*, by J. G. Blaine, Vol. I, pp. 239-40 (1884).

[2] *Recollections*, by Horace Greeley, p. 359 (1869).

farewell forever to scenes made dear by struggle and sorrow. From the rear of the car he said:

> My friends, no one, not in my position, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one of them is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington.[1] Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting to Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Of leaders of men there are two kinds. One sees the thing as it ought to be, and is to be, and condemns all else that falls below the ideal. They are reformers, agitators, and sometimes iconoclasts — men who see the ideal more vividly than they discern the way to it, dreamers who know not the slow ways whereby dreams are wrought into realities. They are noble in their fealty to high visions, and by their burning zeal they make men feel and think; but by a sure instinct we refuse to entrust the reins of power into their hands. Amid the tangle of legal rights and practical necessities, of conflicting interests and constitutional provisions, they are helpless. That they see no difficulties is their strength; that others see all the difficulties is perhaps a greater virtue; and it would be trite to say that both virtues are needed. These idealists,

[1] One who stood near the end of the car — Mr. H. B. Rankin — tells me that Lincoln was for a moment unable to speak. Tears were in his eyes, and he mastered himself only by great effort. When he spoke of his task as greater than that of Washington, there were murmurs in the crowd, as if some thought he overestimated his own importance. Springfield has long since atoned for these things, but few realize the envies, jealousies, and bickerings Lincoln had to endure during the last years of his life there. The train moved on leaving little minds to oblivion, as time has moved on leaving little envies to die.

could they have the power, would no doubt blot out evil at once, leaving the consequences with God; but they would blot out much else besides, for which they would find it hard to be forgiven. Such radicals, however useful as passengers, are unsafe pilots.

Often has it been said that, as a fact, in the case of the abolition of slavery the radical and violent solution of the idealists had at last to be adopted.[1] Apparently so; but in truth it was not so even as to method, much less as to results, as Greeley admitted, somewhat grudgingly; for the Abolitionists, if we may judge them by their leaders, were rarely ardent Union men. Their concern was to "choke down slavery," as the fiery Herndon put it, and many of them saw in disunion a way of escape from political complicity with the curse. Indeed, they were opposed to the Union because it sanctioned slavery, just as the radicals of the South fought it because it menaced the continuance of slavery. Had it not been for a different type of leader, who sought to realize freedom through union, without sharing the bitter feeling on either side, one can hardly conjecture what the result might have been.

The other type of leader is not less loyal to the ideal, but he sees the situation as it is — sees it steadily and sees it whole — and tries patiently and wisely to work out the best results with the forces with which he has to deal. He knows that men are slow of heart and stumbling of step; that they are led by self-interest always and only fitfully by the ideal; so he does not run so far ahead of the masses that they lose sight of him and stop; he knows how to get along with ordin-

[1] Garrison denounced the Constitution as a league with death and a covenant with hell. Parker once thought that if a State wished to go out of the Union, it had a right to do so. — *Theodore Parker*, by J. W. Chadwick, p. 260 (1900). For all his glittering oratory, Wendell Phillips had hardly a rudimentary sense of constructive statesmanship, even continuing his anti-slavery agitation after slavery had ceased to be. — *Wendell Phillips, Orator and Agitator*, by Lorenzo Sears (1910). This is not to discredit the work done by these splendid men, but only to define their limitations.

ary humanity. Such a leader was Lincoln — uniting an unwavering fidelity to a moral ideal with the practical acumen to make his dream come true — handicapped by all the things that go to make up wisdom, yet resolute in his patience, his courage, his self-control, and in his mastery of his life consistently with a high moral purpose. No leader in this land ever stood so close to the common people; no one has been at once so frank and so subtle. He knew the people, he was one of them, and they knew and loved and followed him — paying to him, not less than to their country, "the last full measure of devotion."

By instinct a conservative, Lincoln was too reverent to be cheerfully iconoclastic, and when forced to act by the educative and compulsive power of events, he moved slowly, following the kindly light as far as its radiance led. He refused to skulk behind Providence, holding himself to be as justly responsible for the results of his acts as for the acts themselves. If he suffered himself, as he frankly confessed, to be guided by events, it was not because he had lost sight of principles, still less because he was an opportunist drifting with the tide. It was because, by the terms of his life-philosophy, he recognized in events the movement of moral forces, which he was bound to heed, and the foot-steps of God, which he was bound to follow. He did not presume to know all the will of God, which might be something different from the wish of either party, but so far as it was made plain he tried to do it. But he did not imagine, as is the way of fanatics, that this high faith gave him a right to over-step the law of the land, which he was under vows to uphold.

III

Nor must we forget that Lincoln had to do not only with a condition, but with a theory of State as well. While, as all now see, the angry debate over slavery brought on the conflict, it is clear that upon that issue alone neither side would have gone to war. Far back and deep down lay the fatal dualism, which had been growing from the first, destined to rend

the nation in a strife, the prophecy of which was written in the whole history of the colonies, if not in the annals of England for centuries past. No doubt the Slave Oligarchy manipulated this ancient schism in its own behalf, while a political party, long used to rule, dared to make its exit from power a signal of revolution; for there was a deal of the original man in the men of those days, South as well as North. But this would not have been possible had not the fatal dualism existed, and unless this be kept in mind no one can understand that crisis.

One must know the point of view of the South, and the theory upon which it acted.[1] Many Southern men — such as Stephens and Lee, to name a statesman and a soldier — were opposed to disunion as a policy, deeming it most unwise; but they did not question its validity as an abstract, though perhaps a revolutionary, right. They sincerely held the Constitution to be a Compact, a league of Sovereign Powers, from which any State, for adequate cause, might withdraw at will. Of course upon such a theory, held by many in the North, the Union as we now know and love it could never have been built. Against the final strain of 1861 it proved but a rope of sand; but long before that — notably in 1814, when the embargo pressed ruinously upon New England — the dogma of secession was born, not South, but North. In fact, it had been invoked at sundry times in various parts of the country with regard to other questions than slavery, often upon very slight pretext. Some imagination is now required to picture that state of things, but we must see it if we are to know the supreme service of Lincoln to his nation.

[1] Of course this question was rendered obsolete and academic by the war, but it is the business of the student to know both sides. By far the most able and comprehensive review of the question, from the Southern point of view, may be found in *A Constitutional View of the War*, by A. H. Stephens (1868-70), formerly Vice-President of the Confederacy. How sincere the Southern people were in their faith was revealed by their conduct during the war, for men do not go forth from warm firesides through blood, and fire, and tears, unless they are honest and sincere, however mistaken they may be. And they should at least be permitted to state what they fought for in that war.

Nor was that all. Not only two ideas of State, but two ideals of life had taken root and grown on our eastern shores, each upon its own soil, each taking shape under its own sky. So long as these ideals remained apart, the nation was at peace, not realizing what antagonistic elements it held. If Puritanism was a theocracy, the genius of the Cavalier was individualism, and the social fabrics of the two were, by the same token, utterly unlike. As foreign observers had often noted, North and South, instead of being one nation, had long been two nations in all but name — divided in arts and aims, in social sentiment and political faith. When, therefore, after a long period of internal strife, the cleavage came, it was a natural severance, and the social order, as is nearly always the case, asserted its ascendency over the political order. Lee did not fight as an enemy of the Union, nor yet as a friend of slavery, for he was neither in fact. He fought simply as a liegeman of Virginia, unwilling to invade the scenes of his birth and the shrines of his fathers at the head of a hostile army.[1] With an overwhelming majority of the Southern people slavery was not an issue. Only a small minority held slaves at all, and some of these, especially in the border States, were Union men, while in their hearts many slaveholders hated slavery.[2] But when the debate was ended and the war was at hand, men were obliged to take sides, and they followed where their sense of duty, or their feelings of contiguity and neighborship, led them.

With Lincoln, as with the South, the slavery question was never at any time the paramount issue in the conflict. He disavowed any purpose of interfering, directly or indirectly, with slavery in the States where it existed, declaring, as he truly could, that he had neither the right nor the inclination to do so. He was never an Abolitionist, never an advocate of confiscation. To the end he held, consistently, that if the nation was to free the slaves, it must buy them and set them free; but his view found no favor in the eyes of those who

[1] *Robert E. Lee,* by Thomas Nelson Page, pp. 30-56 (1908).

[2] *Autobiography of N. S. Shaler,* pp. 76-89 (1909).

thought it right to be unjust to men whom they regarded as unjust. Intense as were his feelings against slavery as a "moral, social, and political wrong," he would not wage a war to destroy it, though he insisted that it should not be permitted to survive a war of which it was the inciting cause. His Proclamation of Emancipation, so long held back, was a war measure purely, for which he knew he had no warrant in law; and so clear-sighted was his sense of justice, so empty his heart of all rancor, that he sought to qualify the rigor of his act by some plan of restitution. Then, too, there were problems to follow the freeing of the slaves which he was not eager to face, though others seemed to be able to solve them glibly enough. While it is certain that he would never have returned to bondage any person thus set free, no one knows just how he would have met those issues. Still, as all must see, these were but minor questions alongside the one supreme problem of his life.

As he wrote to Greeley, his one master aim was not to save or destroy slavery, but *to save the Union* — without slavery if he could, with slavery if he must — and from that purpose he could not be turned aside. He held the Constitution to be a perpetual compact, solemnly endorsed, from which no State had a right to withdraw without the consent of the others, and this position he would not yield. Here was joined the real issue in the conflict, to settle which appeal had at last to be made to the awful court of war, both sides fighting with equal sincerity, endurance, and valor. Had there been such a feeling of national unity as now exists, slavery could have been checked and ultimately abolished without war; but real unity there was none. Yet the tide was flowing, and amid the slowly changing conditions of national life, what had echoed as a prophecy in the eloquence of Webster was becoming a necessity, if not a reality. So that Lincoln — in whom, as Stephens noted,[1] the sentiment of Union "rose to the sublimity of a religious mysticism" — instead of saving the Union, may al-

[1] *A Constitutional View of the War*, by A. H. Stephens, Vol. II, p. 448 (1870).

most be said to have presided at its birth, and witnessed its christening with blood and tears. His personality was providential, and the republic of today, united and free, is at once his dream and his memorial.

IV

Surely no man new to power ever faced a more formidable situation than that which confronted Lincoln when he entered the White House. He stole into his capital by night — not without protest on his part [1] — while men were betting in hotel corridors that he would not live to take his seat. He had hardly a good adviser, for even Seward [2] — who wrought so nobly in keeping things intact until he arrived — lost his wits and talked wildly of sinking the slavery question in a war with one or more foreign powers. Perhaps his greatest encouragement came from Douglas, who flung himself into the Union cause, but that great voice was soon hushed.[3] Behind

[1] *Recollections of Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, p. 46.

[2] All admit that Mr. Seward lost his wits entirely when he submitted "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," which was little less than an offer to relieve Lincoln of the drudgery of being President. But he learned his lesson, as Chase and Stanton came, each in his own turn, to learn; and the canny kindness of Lincoln in this affair could hardly be surpassed. — *Life of Seward*, by F. Bancroft, Vol. II, pp. 123-148 (1900). But it is all wrong to portray those men as mere pasteboard figures, as so many have done in their zeal to magnify Lincoln — though, judging from the remark of Secretary Fessenden to Senator Stewart, some of them felt, at times, like office boys. — *Reminiscences*, by W. M. Stewart, p. 172 (1908). For it is true that Lincoln was master of the situation.

[3] "I knew Judge Douglas well: I admired, respected, loved him. I shall never forget the day he quitted Washington to go to his home in Illinois to return no more. Tears were in his eyes and his voice trembled like a woman's. He was then a dying man. He had burned the candle at both ends, . . . and, though not yet fifty, the candle had burned out. His infirmities were no greater than those of Clay; not to be mentioned with those of Webster. . . . No one has found occasion to come to the rescue of his fame. No party interest has been identified with his memory. But when the truth of history is written, it will be told that, not less than Webster and Clay, he, too, was a patriotic man, who loved

him was a divided and distracted North, unwilling, as yet, to fight for the Union or to free the slaves, with its commercial interests demanding peace at any cost of principle. Garrison announced that the Union was dissolved. Greeley begged that the erring Southern sisters be permitted to go in peace. But Lincoln, though he moved slowly, stood firmly on his own feet, faced the peril with calm, level gaze unclouded by selfish fears or bitter rancor, estimating the difficulties and measuring his ability to meet them.

> Seeking to conciliate both sides, he seemed to both to be uncertain, hesitating and vacillating. Sir Walter Scott, in his *Kenilworth,* likens the mind of Queen Elizabeth to one of the balanced rocks of the Druids. "The finger of Cupid, boy though he was painted, could set her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not destroy their equilibrium." So Lincoln seemed to incline from the one side to the other of the conflicting forces about him, but easily as he responded to the pressure of any of them, there was not power enough in them all to overthrow his balance. He had fixed his purpose upon the maintenance of the Union, and to this purpose any plan relative to slavery must be secondary. Unable to persuade the radicals of either side, he was yet able to hold them to his policy of waiting upon events. . . . As so often happens, extremes were working to the same end — separation. . . . Nothing could be gained for freedom by casting off the slave States. More, much more, would be done by holding together. . . . Both might easily have been lost if the attempt to realize both had been made too soon, and that they were not, humanity owes to the wisdom, the patience, and the gentleness of Abraham Lincoln.[1]

Of course he moved too fast for some and too slow for others, and elite statesmen affected to regard his profoundest policy as a manœuver of rustic ignorance and incapacity. His caution was mistaken for irresolution, and because he desired to be just, even to the South, he was thought to be weak and unsteady of purpose. Never for a day did he imagine, after

his country and tried to save the Union."—*The Compromises of Life,* by Henry Watterson, pp. 150-151 (1903).

[1] *Abraham Lincoln,* by F. W. Lehmann (1909).

the manner of the complacent bigot, that all right was on one side and all wrong on the other, knowing that there was present fault in the North to temper obvious folly in the South. He knew that slavery was fixed in the law of the land, confessed in the Constitution and sanctioned by the courts, and his oath of office was a vow to obey the law. Without modifying his "oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free," he was ready to secure the slave States in their rights under the Constitution, and even by amendment to make explicit what he knew to be implied in that document. But he knew, also, that slavery was wrong, and that it would have to go at last, because the increasing kindness and justice of the world were against it. If he would not consent to disunion, neither would he go to war without first appealing to the souls of men. Hence the lofty, half-plaintive words of his First Inaugural, which must have had a strange echo when they were uttered, but which, happily, may now be read as a prophecy fulfilled before our eyes:

> I am loth to close. We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriotic grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over the broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Many have conjectured as to what Lincoln would have done had the South played warily, refrained from insult, put forth a temperate and modest manifesto, setting forth the apparent impracticability of a political union between peoples so radically different in social structure, and appealing to the North to consent to a friendly separation. No doubt he would have hesitated to fire the first gun, but it is almost certain that he would have fired it rather than see the Union, which he had sworn to uphold, go to pieces. Fortunately, or unfortunately, it was not to be so, for the South was in no temper for a waiting game. Sumter was fired upon — not without provocation

— the divided North was cemented in the flame of patriotic ardor, and the nation joined in a war for the Union.

V

From the fall of Arthur Ladd, its first victim, to its closing scene, that was the saddest and the noblest war that ever raged — a Nemesis of national sin and the birth throes of a new nation and a new era. Through it all Lincoln kept his patience, his gentleness, his faith, and his clear, cool reason, his face wearing amidst the storm of battle the grief of a nation torn and bleeding of heart, while harassed by office-seekers and lampooned by critics, reviled at home and ridiculed abroad.[1] He demeaned himself so nobly in that critical and testing ordeal, he had such resources of sagacity, such refinements of sympathy, such wonderful secrets of endurance, that no one could fail to be moved and humbled, if nothing more, by intercourse with him. He stood, as the central figure of the conflict, gentle, strong, and wise, firm as granite if need required, yet strangely piteous and sad, bearing insult without revenge, doing his duty as God gave him to see it; serene in time of tumult, and still the center of kindness in a tempest of hatred.

Simple in manner, plain of speech, his quaint humor and homely ways gave him a familiarity of relation with the common people which few men enjoy. Disasters gathered thick and fast upon the field of battle, and the tide of public feel-

[1] As for the attitude of the English people, it is enough to say that classes will be classes. The Tory press, led by the London *Times*, ridiculed Lincoln as a baboon, a buffoon, a clodhopper, a grotesque joker who sang ribald songs on a battle-field. Mr. Binns, an admirable English biographer of Lincoln, reproduces excerpts from the ruffian British press, and they make strange reading.—*Life of Lincoln*, pp. 366-68 (1907). Also, *Life of E. L. Godkin*, pp. 197-282 (1907). On the other side were Cobden, Bright, Forster, Goldwin Smith, who saw that Lincoln was fighting the battle of free labor. Carl Marx, too, had his part, and no small part, in stirring up the working people.—*Life of Marx*, by J. Spargo, pp. 220-225 (1910). Nor should any record omit mention of the magnificent oratory of Henry Ward Beecher in the mother country.

ing seemed at times to turn against him, but he kept his wits and never lost heart. Beneath a mask of careless humor and guileless simplicity he concealed the wiles of strategy,[1] and was often most anxiously reticent when apparently the most indifferent and jocular. "His 'cunning' fairly enters the borders of inspiration," said Evarts, in a sentence unusually terse for Evarts; but it might better have been called a trinity of shrewdness, tact, and lightning-quickness of expedient, whereby he divined the trends of public sentiment and piloted the storm of war. Amid the wild passions of the hour, and a babel of discordant and bitter voices, he held aloft the ideals of peace through Union, of liberty under the law, of fortitude in defeat, of mercy in victory. He had no vanity, no bitterness, no pettiness, and his ingenuity of self-effacement was as remarkable as his unwillingness to evade duty or to escape censure. With his order to Meade to follow up the victory at Gettysburg he sent a note which revealed, like a ray of white light, what manner of man sat in the White House:[2]

[1] Charles A. Dana, who was assistant Secretary of War for a time, and very close to the President, writes: "I do not risk anything in saying . . . that the greatest general we had, greater than Grant or Thomas, was Abraham Lincoln. . . . Von Moltke was not a better general or an abler planner or expounder of a campaign."—*Life of Dana,* by J. H. Wilson, p. 315 (1907). He refers, of course, to the later period of the war. Greeley thought Lincoln was greater in political strategy, in which he had had long practice, and certain it is that his discomfiture of his formidable assailants in 1863, with regard to the Vallandingham affair, cannot easily be paralleled for shrewdness. See the tribute of J. G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress,* Vol. I, pp. 546-49 (1884).

[2] A letter from Hon. James Harlan, of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, who was a member of the second Lincoln cabinet, to Mr. I. N. Phillips, of Bloomington, Ill., under date of April 17, 1897, is authority for this statement. Senator Harlan wrote: "The President sent an order, privately, directing Gen. Meade to follow up his victory by an immediate attack on Lee's retreating army, and thus, if possible, prevent the recrossing of the Potomac by the Confederate forces, accompanied by a confidential letter authorizing him to make the order public in case of disaster, and in case of success to destroy both the order and confidential letter. Thus much you may rely upon as historically true. Whether

This order is not of record. If you are successful you may destroy it, together with this note; if you fail, publish the order, and I will take the responsibility.

No one claims that Lincoln was a master of political science and history; but within the range of his knowledge and vision, which did not extend far beyond the Constitution and laws of his native land, he was a statesman. For the difficult task assigned him he was supremely fitted. He knew how to keep along with the temper of the people, warming it the while with something of his own fervor, and surely no one else could have held together such a cabinet which required so firm, so tactful, and withal so forgiving a chief. No man, it is safe to say, knew better than he, equally in the game of politics and in the larger concerns of official conduct, how to draw the line, and where to draw it, to bring results. He sanctioned, though he did not originate, the military arrests, in the sincere belief that the power was given him by the Constitution; and his justification of their use was scrupulously devoid of sophistry. That he made mistakes in his choice of men, particularly of military men, is admitted. Yet nothing could direct him or any one else to the right men except the criterion of experience, fearfully costly as it was. Grant and Sherman he recognized at once when they appeared. Few, of all those who called him a tyrant, ever charged him with personal cruelty,[1] for he had set his heart on saving life when-

or not these papers reached Gen. Meade I am not able to say. I had supposed, prior to the receipt of your letter, that this incident had remained unknown for twenty years after the close of the war of the rebellion to everybody except Gen. Meade, Robert T. Lincoln, and myself.—*Abraham Lincoln*, by I. N. Phillips, p. 94 (1910).

[1] Much has been written of the treatment of prisoners during the war. That there was cruelty on both sides is true, but it was due rather to the inhumanity of subordinates than to the ruling authorities. Libby and Andersonville were matched by Camp Douglas, Rock Island, Elmira, and Point Lookout, where the mortality of Southern men was frightful — due, of course, in large part, to the cold climate. But the description of Camp Douglas by Henry M. Stanley, who was a prisoner there, justifies the remark of Sherman that "war is hell," as truly as did the atrocities of Wirtz at Andersonville—*Autobiography*, pp. 205-215 (1909). Foreign observers marveled at the humanities and amenities on both sides.

ever there was the slightest excuse; taking time, amidst harassing cares, to mitigate the horror of war, and even to write to those who had lost their loved ones on the field of battle. His letter to Mother Bixby is a classic:

> Dear Madam:—I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

History has made record of those awful years when the bravest of men, arrayed in long lines of blue and grey, were cut down like grass. God of dreams! what scenes were those at Shiloh and Lookout Mountain, at Cold Harbor and Vicksburg, at Antietam and Atlanta, at Gettysburg and the Wilderness, while far away in Northern towns and Southern hamlets white-faced women heard the roll-call of the dead. Nor did any one suffer more than the lonely man who sat in the telegraph office and shook with sobs at the news of great slaughter, or paced the floor of the White House all night till dawn, his groans overheard by the watchers below. Yet in no other way, save by travail and woe, could the Union, hitherto only an abstraction, if not a mere hypostasis of memory and hope, become a reality; nor was ever sin atoned for without shedding of blood. How fitting, then, that he who presided over that scene should stand upon the great battle-field of the war and utter those great and simple words, which are now, and ever shall be, a part of the sacred writings of the patriotic faith of this republic:

> Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Events marched rapidly; the slaves were freed; the armies of the South melted away; and the hand that guided the war was held out in brotherly forgiveness.[1] Perhaps the men of the future, looking back from afar, unbiased and clear-eyed, will say that the noblest feat of the genius of Lincoln was the policy he outlined for dealing with the South after the war! There was no rancor in it, no gleam of selfish pride in power, but a magnanimity in triumph that led Tolstoi to say

[1] *Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction*, by C. H. McCarthy (1901). Whether, amid the bitter passions of the hour, he could have carried out such a policy is open to conjecture; but he would have tried it. Southern men were surprised to know of his lenient spirit, as may be seen from the conversation between General Gordon and E. B. Washburn at Appomattox.—*Reminiscences of the War*, by J. B. Gordon, pp. 450-52 (1903). Had the men who did the talking been as brave and generous as the men who did the fighting, the result would have been different. Alas, there were those of his own party in the North who regarded the death of Lincoln as a godsend to the country.—*Life of Lincoln*, by J. T. Morse, Vol. II, p. 350 (1896).

that he was "*a Christ in miniature.*" His words had in them, towards the end, a tenderly solemn, seer-like quality of blended prophecy and pity. There was on him, then, something of that touch of gentleness in sadness, as if presaging doom; and this it was that men felt when they caught his eye, which so many said they could never forget. His death, coming at such an hour, filled the nation with an awe akin to that evoked by the great tragedies — something of inevitability, much of mystery, as impossible to account for as it is to measure the heavens or to interpret the voices of the winds.

VI

It has been said — by Thomas Carlyle — that the religion of a man is the chief fact with regard to him. If we seek for that primary thing in Lincoln, it is found not in his use of Bible imagery — though parts of the Bible were written in his memory — nor yet in his words of goodwill to the men of this or that sect, but in the fiber of his soul, the quality of his mind, and most of all in the open book of his life. In his elemental qualities of courage, honor, and loyalty to the truth, his melting pity and his delicate justice, the faith on which he acted is unveiled as it could not be revealed in any list of dogmas. His mind was so moral, and his morality so intelligent, that his faith was in him as color is in a rose, as the grain is in the oak.

Of the skyey genius of Plato and Emerson he had none. His mind was profound and penetrating, but always practical; and such a mind is never radical, nor does it outrun the facts to inquire what the end of things will be. It deals with realities, not theories, suspects its own aspirations, and is content to take one step at a time. He knew not "the great escapings of ecstatic souls," and it is a pity that he did not, for the memory of such hours would have brightened his somewhat arid journey with oases of lucid joy. Years of meditation had brought him a faith of his own — a kind of sublime fatalism in which truth and right will win as surely as suns rise and set. This assurance fed his soul and was the hidden

spring of his strength, his patient valor, and his unbending firmness; the secret at once of his character and of his prophetic insight. Holding to the moral order of the world, he knew that truth will prevail whatever may be the posture of the hour. In his moods of melancholy, which were many and bitter, he threw himself upon this confidence, not so much in formal prayer — though that was the last resort — as in a deep inner assurance in which he found peace.

Yet, for all his solid common sense, his fine poise of reason, and his wise humor, at bottom Lincoln was a mystic [1] — that is, one who felt that the Unseen has secrets which are known only by minds fine enough to see and hear them. The truth is that, in common with all the great leaders of men, he himself had much of that fineness of soul — a window opening into the Unseen, whence he drew his strength and charm. This it was that gave to his words a quality of their own, and they seem to this day full of ever new prophetic meanings. No man of state in this land ever made so deep a religious impression and appeal as Lincoln did in his last days, when the very soul of the man shone in his great sad face, in his words and works of mercy, in the dignity and pathos of his life, in his solicitude to heal the dreadful wounds of war. Such a character inspires a kind of awe; men bow to it, and are touched with a mingled feeling of wonder, sadness, and hope.

Such a man the times demanded, and such in the Providence of God was given to his nation and his age. On the virgin soil of the West he grew, a man, as Grady said, in whose

[1] For a suggestive study of the mystical element in Lincoln, see *Abraham Lincoln*, by S. Schechter (1909). As a lad in far off Roumania the author, now president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, read the story of Lincoln in the Hebrew papers, and longed to live in a land where such a man could grow. His comparison between Lincoln the story-teller and the old Hebrew parabolists is most interesting. Also, *Religious Convictions of Lincoln*, by C. O. Poole (1885), where Mr. Herndon is quoted as writing: "I maintain that Lincoln was deeply religious in all times and places, in spite of his transient doubts. Sometimes it appeared to me that his soul was just fresh from the presence of the Creator." Also, *The Inner Life of Lincoln*, by F. B. Carpenter (1867).

ample nature the virtues of Puritan and Cavalier were blended, and in the depths of whose great soul the faults of both were lost — "not a law-breaker, but a law-maker; a fighter, but for peace; a calm, grave, strong man; formidable, sad; facing down injustice, dishonesty, and crime; and 'dying in his boots' in defense of an ideal — of all world types distinctive to us, peculiar, particular, and unique." Simple as Æsop, yet subtle as an oriental; meditative as Marcus Aurelius, yet blithe as Mark Twain; as much of a democrat as Walt Whitman, yet devoid of that vague, dreamy egotism; he stood in the White House a high priest of humanity in this land, where are being wrought the highest ideals of the race. He was a prophet of the political religion of his country — tall of soul, gentle, just, and wise, and of his fame there will be no end.

Still, and always, when we look back at Lincoln, and see him amid the vicissitudes of his life, it is the man that we honor — a plain, honest, kindly man, clear of head and sound of heart, full equally of pity and humor, who knew that humanity is deeply wounded and tried to heal it, caring much more to deserve praise than to possess it — a fellow to the finest, rarest, truest souls now or ever to be "citizens of eternity."

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